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# **PSEUDO-CRITICISM**



# PSEUDO-CRITICISM

OR

## *THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND ITS COUNTERFEIT*

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS book is an exposure of a false system of Biblical Criticism, by which "the Higher Criticism" has been discredited and almost supplanted. And Professor Driver's "Book of Genesis," which has appeared since the following pages were written, may serve to illustrate the distinction here intended.

The first section of the Introduction to that book contains an analysis of the text of Genesis; the two following sections are mainly a presentation of the opinions and theories and dicta of foreign scholars who treat the Bible on Rationalistic principles. The one is an interesting and valuable study in Higher Criticism; to describe the other sections by that title is a mere misuse of words.

The influence of the Rationalists appears not only in the general drift of Canon Driver's treatise, but in many of its specific statements. To take an instance at random, he writes:—

"We have found that, while there is no sufficient reason for doubting the existence and *general* historical character of the biographies of the patriarchs, nevertheless much uncertainty must be allowed to attach to *details* of the narrative"; which means that though the Rationalists have failed to discover any grounds for challenging the truth of the narrative, the Christian has no sufficient warrant for accepting it. Or, to state the matter tersely, there are no grounds

for concluding that the Genesis narrative is not true; but in the absence of corroboration from pagan sources, we must not assume its truth. For the testimony of the Bible must never be accorded any higher value than is allowed to the evidence of "informers" in our courts of justice; and therefore we are naturally on the alert to find "sufficient reason for doubting it"!

This sort of criticism is gratifying to the Rationalist; but a Christian naturally shrinks from it. And so, in the concluding section of his Introduction, Dr. Driver goes on to formulate the utterly unintelligent and wholly untenable compromise, in which writers of his school take refuge from the obvious consequences of their teaching. Although, according to the writers whose views he adopts,<sup>1</sup> Genesis is mainly a compilation of myths and legends, traceable ultimately to pagan sources, he earnestly insists upon "the inspiration of its authors."<sup>2</sup> This may satisfy a scholar among his books, but it will not do with sensible men of the world. Such men care nothing for controversial subtleties about the inspiration of Scripture, but they will rightly hold that if inspiration be not a guarantee of truth, it may be classed with the superstitions of religion.

Professor Driver's note on the Cosmogony (pp. 19-33) is typical of the "Critical" methods. He proves clearly that Genesis i. may be construed in such a way as to discredit it. People who frequent the law courts know well that this is true of all testimony, no matter

<sup>1</sup> Views, not one of which has originated in this country, our English scholars merely "edit" them in such a way as to make them palatable to Christian readers.

<sup>2</sup> P. lxix f. See pp. 87, 88.

how unimpeachable it may be. But, in contrast with the ways of the "Critics," an impartial tribunal always seeks to put a favourable construction upon the statements of a witness of good repute.

To take a single illustrative instance, Professor Driver reads into the chapter the figment of "the creation of the sun, moon, and stars after the earth" (p. 24); whereas nothing whatever is said about the "creation" of the heavenly bodies, save as they are included in the first verse. The word used in verse 16 is of the broadest meaning and widest application, and is never translated by "create" in the English Bible. Of course it is easy in this way to make Genesis clash with science.

The "narrative," he avers, "possesses no claim to contain a scientific account of the origin of the world." But the suggestion that in a Revelation intended for all kinds of men in every age God would inspire a "scientific account of the origin of the world," is nearly as grotesque as the other suggestion which Professor Driver elaborates, that He would inspire a whitewashed version of the "creation epic" of Babylon.

The question is not whether the Cosmogony teaches science, which no one asserts; but whether it is discredited by science, which no one has proved. And not even the testimony of such a scientist as Dana in its defence will weigh as much with men of the world, as the fact that such a scientist as Huxley entered the lists to prove it in error and failed.<sup>1</sup>

The order of the events recorded in Genesis i. could be stated in some four or five thousand different ways.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23.

And the fact that the order as given is not inconsistent with the science of our own age, points unmistakably to the conclusion at which Professor Driver arrives, that it was written by Divine inspiration. The alternative supposition would be that thousands of years ago the Hebrews were abreast of what we call "modern science."

The Pseudo-Criticism has won its way chiefly because its exponents have been allowed to warn off all who are not philological experts. In the following pages the reader will find proof that these questions are no preserves of the book scholar; that in dealing with them common-sense and acquaintance with the science of evidence are of primary importance; and that, therefore, educated "men of affairs" are better fitted to decide what are the "assured results of modern Criticism" than the pundits and the professors.

The Critics, moreover, seem to think that superstition is the monopoly of those who refuse to accept those "results." But in discrediting the Bible, superstition becomes their only refuge from Rationalism. And the denial of the Virgin Birth, and of other transcendental truths of Christianity, shows how the current is setting at this moment. Are we in England prepared to follow the lead of Germany in this respect?

The fact is that the Critics are so engrossed with what may be called the surface difficulties of Bible study, that they overlook difficulties of a far graver kind; difficulties which bring all fearless thinkers to the parting of the ways, compelling them to make choice between accepting the Bible as a Divine revelation, or giving up belief in Christianity. The diffi-

culties which the Critics deal in have their counterpart in the sphere of God's moral government of the world—they are a part of the discipline of the life of faith: the deeper difficulties which the Critics ignore have no parallel in the natural sphere.

The author's former book on this subject is addressed to Bible students; the present work appeals mainly to men of the world as such. The scheme of it has been suggested by the reception accorded to the Bishop of Durham's Preface to the "Bible and Modern Criticism." Dr. Moule has unique claims to a respectful hearing on questions of this kind. And he has seldom written with more impressive earnestness than in appealing to Christians to take note of the tendencies of this so-called Criticism of the Bible. But his appeal has been entirely ignored by the Critics; and their press organs have dismissed it with scant courtesy. They seem blind to the consequences of their teaching, and contemptuously indifferent to the opinions of all who differ from them.

The nature of those consequences is here illustrated by the case of three representative men—Dr. Harnack, Professor Friedrich Delitzsch, and Professor George Adam Smith.

Chapter V. is mainly an extract from the author's "Christianised Rationalism and the Higher Criticism, an Answer to Dr. Harnack's 'What is Christianity?'"<sup>1</sup>

As for Chapter VIII., Professor Driver's "Book of

<sup>1</sup> "Twentieth Century Papers" Series. The author had the honour of presenting a copy of that treatise to the German Emperor, and of receiving His Majesty's "sincere thanks" for it.

Genesis" may serve to point the moral there enforced. For while he freely discusses the views of eminent Critics, the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ he systematically ignores. The "Bible Dictionary," of which Dr. Driver himself is one of the editors, tells us that our Divine Lord was the dupe of "current Jewish notions" about the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> This indeed is one of "the assured results of modern Criticism." Even an English clergyman, therefore, can now afford to dismiss *His* teaching as unworthy of notice.

In conclusion, the author wishes to acknowledge his obligations to the Rev. Robert Sinker, D. D., Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, for encouragement and valuable help in preparing these pages for the press.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 94.

# PSEUDO-CRITICISM

## CHAPTER I

**W**ERE I here to describe the measures adopted by the police in tracking criminals and bringing them to justice, the popularity of my book would no doubt be vastly greater than these pages are likely to attain. But if I turn aside to speak of police inquiries and the proceedings of our courts of justice, it will be merely in passing and by way of illustration, and to give prominence to two theses which, though of principal importance in connection with my subject, are generally ignored. For my subject is a defence of the Higher Criticism against the reproach which has fallen upon it, and an exposure of the vagaries and errors of a pseudo-Criticism which has filched a title to which it has no just claim.

It is manifestly of greater consequence that we should have wholesome unadulterated bread, than that we should know who baked it, and by whom the wheat was grown and ground. And it is incomparably more important that we should have an accurate text of the Bible, than that we should know where, and when, and by whom the various books were written or compiled. The pure loaf—to keep up the figure—we owe to “Textual Criticism”; while “Higher Criticism” claims to enlighten us about its history. It is



obvious, therefore, that, by the test of practical usefulness, the Higher Criticism must be content with a secondary place.

But this is no disparagement of a system of study which has thrown new light upon many parts of Holy Scripture, and has brought us new proofs of its authenticity and accuracy, proofs of a kind that preceding generations knew nothing of.

And even if its legitimate results should disturb certain "orthodox traditions," the Bible is the gainer; and those who make that a ground for refusing its help, do a great disservice to the cause of truth. The Higher Criticism is admirable in its aims, and its results should be hailed with thankfulness by every Christian.

But here we must distinguish. The records of crime would disclose many a case in which men who were honestly pursuing a legitimate calling became involved in some nefarious business of a wholly different kind, and ended by treating their nefarious and their honest pursuits as one concern. So was it with the pioneers of the Higher Criticism. In their day infidelity was rampant in Germany, and they conceived the laudable desire of winning back the educated classes to Christianity. To attain this end they consented to treat the Bible on the Dutch auction principle, lowering its claims to a level at which the Rationalists would accept it on their own terms. Miracles, of course, were jettisoned. Inspiration, which is but one sort of miracle, went overboard; and prophecy shared in the general wreck. In a word, every Divine element in the Bible was abandoned, and the critical study of "the living and eternally abiding

Word of God" degenerated into a sort of literary *post-mortem* upon a purely human and altogether dead book. And in the pursuit of that study, as time went on, infidels of the type of Kuenen and Wellhausen supplanted enlightened and spiritual men who revered the Scriptures.

Every intelligent person will recognise that this sceptical crusade against the Bible, which masquerades as "Higher Criticism," bears no kinship with inquiries such as those to which that title properly belongs. Their aims are different; their methods are different; and their results, of course, lie wide apart. We must always distinguish, therefore, between true Criticism and its counterfeit; between the Higher Criticism and "Higher Criticism" in inverted commas. The one finds an apt illustration in the proceedings of an English court of justice; the other reminds us of a French court-martial upon a Jew accused of treason. Like most words, *critic* has various meanings. Etymologically and in its highest sense it signifies a judge; popularly, it stands for a hostile fault-finder. The "Critic" in inverted commas belongs to the second category.

As already indicated, the importance of ascertaining the text of Scripture is greater than that of analysing it. The latent boast in the title of Higher Criticism can therefore be justified only by the fact that not even Textual Criticism demands so wide a range and so high a development of judicial qualities.<sup>1</sup> And yet, in

<sup>1</sup> The triumph of the Westcott-Hort school of Textual criticism in the revision of the New Testament was due to either ignorance or neglect of the science of evidence. The mutilation of the Gospels by making the text agree with cer-

this very sphere, even the educated and cultured classes are content blindly to accept the dicta of men who have no knowledge of the science of evidence, and most of whom are evidently destitute of the judicial faculty.

Let us take the case, for instance, of an inquiry respecting the genuineness of the books of Moses. A competent knowledge of ancient languages, and an intimate acquaintance with the results of archæological research, might fit anyone to give valuable evidence in any such inquiry. But it would afford no guarantee whatever of fitness to adjudicate upon that evidence. It is not pretended, of course, that the study of Hebrew or of the cuneiform inscriptions disqualifies for the practical side of life. But there is not an undergraduate in any one of our universities who could not fill in half a dozen names to illustrate Matthew Arnold's dictum, that men who "make study and learning the business of their lives" are apt, "from want of some discipline or other, to lose all balance of judgment, all common-sense."

The value of an expert's evidence depends not merely on his exceptional acquaintance with the subject which he has made a specialty, but also on his capacity of concentrating attention and thought upon one particular element in an inquiry. This very habit, however, makes him impatient when others insist on taking a wider view than his own, and giving due

tain of the oldest MSS. was but an example of the tendency of laymen—and here the New Testament Company were mere laymen—to disparage indirect evidence when direct evidence is available. No lawyer would accept the authority of those MSS. against the united voice of the Versions and the Fathers.

weight to considerations of a kind that he ignores. The very qualities, therefore, which constitute his value as a witness tend to unfit him for the position of a judge. Hence it is that no civilised community tolerates a tribunal of experts.

In a recent trial in London the practice of vivisection was involved. In another, patent medicines supplied the issue. If a court of experts could ever be justified, it was here. But the experts were relegated to the witness-chair, and men who had no technical knowledge of medicine in the one case, and of vivisection in the other, heard their evidence, and arrived at decisions which commanded public confidence.

All this is familiar ground to the lawyer. And if I were here to draw upon my own experience for practical illustrations of the blunders of experts, I should, as already suggested, add much to the interest of these pages. Among the "undiscovered murders" the enumeration of which in that category may be thus explained, would be one of the cases reckoned among the exploits of the now historic "Jack the Ripper." The popular history of the "Whitechapel murders," I may add, is based largely on the theories of experts. And, while the author of those crimes was horribly real, "Jack the Ripper" is a myth.

But such matters cannot fitly be discussed here. And if I mention one more case in brief detail, it is because it points so aptly the special moral which I wish to enforce.

In the South-Western Railway murder case of 1897, an elaborate chain of circumstantial evidence closed round a particular person. The only apparent flaw in it was that a principal witness wavered in his identi-

fication of the accused. But the ground of his hesitation was because the man was clean shaved, whereas the murderer wore a mustache. The witness did not know, however, that an hour before the crime was committed the man whom he singled out of a dozen paraded for inspection had entered a barber's shop and purchased a false mustache.

That fact seemed to render a case which was already strong both complete and irresistible. But it was inseparably bound up with another fact. The distance between the barber's shop and the railway station at which the murderer joined his victim in the train was adequate proof of an *alibi* which shattered the whole case against the accused. *That one fact possibly saved him from the gallows.*

## CHAPTER II

**T**HE apparent success of the false "Higher Criticism" largely depends on the fallacy of supposing that if a seemingly complete case is made out against the genuineness of a book, the fact is thereby established that it is not genuine. The Critics boast of superior knowledge: have they never heard of cases such as that mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter?<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary to go back to the days of unscrupulous and cruel judges to seek for cases where innocent men have been convicted of crime on seemingly valid evidence. The records of the Home Office during the years of my official connection with that department would furnish many striking instances of the kind.

But more than this: are the Critics aware that no criminal charge is ever sent for trial unless an apparently complete case is offered in support of it; and that in a civil action the defendant is never called upon unless a case is established which, if unanswered, would entitle the plaintiff to a verdict? And one of the main functions of a judge is to see to it that no one shall be put upon his defence, whether in a crim-

<sup>1</sup>The only thing exceptional about that case was that, although, for reasons which I need not mention, an efficient and zealous police officer made special efforts to find rebutting evidence, the one exculpatory fact stood alone.

inal or in a civil court, unless and until an apparently complete case has been established to his prejudice by legal evidence.

The thoughtless and the prejudiced may ignore all this. But the intelligent reader will apply it to the subject in hand; and it will enable him to form a just estimate of the pretensions of the pseudo-Criticism.

One of the "assured results" of this Criticism, for example, is that the Pentateuch is a Jewish work of a comparatively late date. But, as we have seen, a really strong case can be shattered by a single fact; and even if the Critics' case against the Mosaic books were as complete as it is faulty, there is one fact that would explode it: and that fact is *the Samaritan Bible*.

In the Jewish Bible—which is identical with what we call "The Old Testament"—the books are grouped in three divisions; namely, "the Law," "the Prophets," and "the Writings." But there was a standing feud between the Jews and the Samaritans; and as the first division of the Canon was the only one which was wholly free from Jewish taint, the sacrosanct Scriptures of the Samaritans were limited to the Pentateuch.

And yet the Critics would have us believe that the Scriptures which these men held in such special reverence were literary forgeries, written by Jews after the Ten Tribes had separated from them, and a considerable portion of which dated from after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Critics differ as to the precise dates to which the several parts of the Pentateuch should be assigned. And such details have no bearing on my argument. For they are

The reader will demand, perhaps, "What answer do the Critics give to this?" The Critics give no answer whatever to it. Indeed, they never notice anything urged against what they call "the assured results" of their inquiries. And why? Presumably because, as I have said, they imagine that if a case can be established for or against anything, the question at issue is settled. It is an attitude of mind with which my experience of legal and police work has made me familiar.

Before turning away from this, let me emphasize two points. The first is, that the fact of the Samaritan Bible is as definite a bar to the sane and reasonable views associated with the name of that most eminent of the Critics, the late Professor Dillmann, as it is to what may be described as the criticism *pour rire* of the Graf-Wellhausen apostasy. And the second is, that while in a criminal trial the case against the accused is based on *facts*—definite and thoroughly tested facts which satisfy men whose only aim is to arrive at truth—the attack upon the Pentateuch rests entirely on critical theories and inferences, without a single fact to support it.

Here is Professor Driver's statement of the case:—

"We can only argue upon grounds of probability derived from our view of the progress of the art of writing, or of literary composition, or of the rise and growth of the

agreed that the Pentateuch as a whole dates from after the return from Babylon. And this was the very period when the action of the Jews towards them rendered the Samaritans so bitterly hostile. That a book which originated at such time should have been adopted as their Bible is quite incredible.



prophetic tone and feeling in ancient Israel, or of the period at which the traditions contained in the narratives might have taken shape, or of the probability that they would have been written down before the impetus given to culture by the monarchy had taken effect, and similar considerations, for estimating most of which, though plausible arguments, on one side or the other, may be advanced, a standard on which we can confidently rely scarcely admits of being fixed." ("Introduction," 6th ed., p. 123.)

a If the Critics had remembered Archbishop Whately's "Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte," a saving sense of humour might have led them to conceal in some way the kinship of their case against the Patriarchs and the Mosaic records, with the argument to prove that Napoleon was a myth, and the reports of his defeats and victories untrustworthy!<sup>1</sup>

"*Grounds of probability: plausible arguments.*"—Fancy a suit to set aside some ancient deed or charter, based on "evidence" of this kind! If only we could get these pseudo-Critics before any sort of competent tribunal, they would be "laughed out of court" in an hour.

I commend to the reader the following words of an eminent scholar of a different school, a man of such a sensitively judicial cast of mind that he is generally apt to understate his case—I refer to the Dean of Canterbury:—

"The origin and composition of the Pentateuch according to those theories is of so unexampled and extraordinary a

<sup>1</sup> A postscript to the 12th edition is a splendid piece of pseudo-Criticism, proving conclusively that Moscow was never burned at all!

character, that the most positive historical evidence would be required to justify our acceptance of such an account of it. There is no instance of an ancient book of history being composed like a tessellated pavement, in which several unknown sources are dove-tailed into one another, sometimes in the most minute pieces. Still less is there any instance of an elaborate historical and legislative work having been composed with the object of confusing, if not perverting, a nation's traditions of its own history and its ancient laws; still less of such a work succeeding in the attempt. If such a scheme were difficult with any nation, it would be tenfold more difficult in the case of the Jews, one of whose chief characteristics, at once their strength and their danger, is their intense tenacity, and who were always, for good or for harm, 'a stiff-necked people.' But it is impossible not to add that, most incredible, if not most monstrous, of all, is the supposition that such a pious fraud was committed at the instigation of the God of truth, and that the books which are its record and its instrument can be regarded as inspired by Him."<sup>1</sup>

This attack upon the Pentateuch has a sinister history. It originated long ago, when paganism sought to check the spread of Christianity. It was revived in the eighteenth century by Jean Astruc, a typical

<sup>1</sup>This extract is from Dr. Wace's "Summary to *Lex Mosaica*," p. 617; a series of essays by eminent scholars, which are a masterly refutation of the pseudo-Criticism and a valuable exposition of the true Higher Criticism. "Are the Critics Right?" by Wilhelm Möller—formerly "immovably convinced of the irrefutable correctness of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis"—is, in smaller compass, an able defence of the Pentateuch. And "Criticism Criticised" is a report of the Oxford meetings on this subject, with papers by the Dean of Canterbury, Prof. Margoliouth, and others. In the same connection I would mention Canon Girdlestone's "Hebrew Criticism"; and "Higher Criticism," by Rev. Robert Sinkler, D. D., Librarian of Trin. Coll., Cambridge.

Frenchman of that period—half-Jesuit, half-infidel—and it was afterwards formulated by German Rationalists. The ground on which it found favour in England is now discarded as an ignorant blunder. For it was assumed that history began with the Greeks, and that what were then regarded as pre-historic times were barbarous. It was therefore held to be incredible that such a marvellous literature as the Mosaic books could have originated a thousand years before Herodotus. To-day, however, history dates back to ages far remote, and it is known that a thousand years even before Moses literature flourished. And we are told on high authority that “In the century before the Exodus, Palestine was a land of books and schools.”<sup>1</sup> It had long enjoyed a high civilisation.

But infidels care nothing for the discoveries of archæology. That their Christian allies should ignore the protests based upon them by men like Professor Sayce (whose words I have here quoted) is one of the enigmas of this controversy.

The question of inspiration is quite outside the scope of my present argument. And it will be time enough to defend the historical accuracy of the Pentateuch when some case has been made out to call for an answer. Every archæological discovery has been confirmatory of it—a statement which, if untrue, is easily refuted.

<sup>1</sup> “Lex Mosaica,” p. 9. In a treatise so recent as the Introduction to *The Speaker's Commentary*, we read, “The first question which naturally occurs is, Was the art of writing known in the age of Moses?”

'As for the "Mosaic Cosmogony," if the Gladstone-Huxley tournament upon that question in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* has failed to silence the silly cuckoo-cry about "the conflict between Science and Genesis," all discussion is idle. Mr. Gladstone's thesis was that Science is perfectly in accord with Genesis as to the order in which life appeared upon our globe. Upon one point only did Professor Huxley attempt to upset this, and that point depended on interpreting "creeping things" in Genesis i. by the use of the word in Leviticus xi. 29-31. "The merest Sunday-School exegesis," he said, "suffices to prove that when the Mosaic writer in Genesis i. 24 speaks of creeping things, he means to include lizards among them." A sheer blunder, based on the chance reading of the English Bible; for there is no affinity between the word used in Genesis i. and that employed in Leviticus xi.

But instead of apologising to the "Sunday School," Professor Huxley appealed to his "eminent friend Professor Dana" on the general question, and Professor Dana's answer was, "I believe that the first chapter of Genesis and Science are in accord."<sup>1</sup>

But, it will be said, the testimony of true Higher Criticism is decisive on the main question here at issue. Such a statement betokens either effrontery or ignorance. True Criticism argues that if Greek words are found in Daniel, the book was presumably written in the Greek period; and that if wilderness words are found in Exodus, the book was written in the time

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1886, p. 304. See "The Bible and Modern Criticism," chap. x.

of the desert wanderings. But though facts refute the argument in regard to Daniel, and establish its validity in regard to Exodus, the pseudo-Critics insist on rejecting both these books. Whether this discredits the books or the Critics, the reader must decide.

Candour will admit, however, that while philological inquiry is entirely on the side of the Pentateuch, it seemed formerly to afford materials for a plausible case against Daniel. When the old pagan attack upon the book was renewed in modern times, ten Greek words at least were enumerated as a ground for discrediting it. But this was a blunder. The Critics themselves now acknowledge that the only Greek words in Daniel are the names of two, or possibly three, of the musical instruments mentioned in the third chapter.

And the presence of these can be accounted for. Professor Sayce has shown that "there were Greek colonies on the coast of Palestine in the time of Hezekiah,"<sup>1</sup> a century before Daniel was born. In recognition of the services of Greek mercenaries in his army, King Pharaoh Necho (possibly on the field where King Josiah fell) dedicated his corselet at a Greek shrine. And a brother of the Greek poet Alcæus won distinction in the army of Babylon at the very time when Daniel held power in the palace.<sup>2</sup> That Greek musical instruments should have been used in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and that they

<sup>1</sup> "Higher Criticism and the Monuments," p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> Grote's "History of Greece," Part II. chap. xix. *Bible Dict.*, art. "Neco." "The House of Seleucus," p. 8.

should have carried their Greek names with them, might therefore be regarded as a matter of course.

What, then, will the reader think when I add that a contemporary advocate of the critical hypothesis persists in declaring that "the Greek words *demand* a date [for the book of Daniel] after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander"? He will probably suspect me of resorting to the base artifice of trying to discredit the distinguished scholars of the "Higher Criticism" by identifying them with language used by some foolish or unscrupulous "satellite" of the movement. Not so. The statement I have quoted is put forward deliberately and emphatically by the most eminent and most trusted exponent of the "Higher Criticism" in England—I mean Professor Driver of Oxford.

This, of course, does not establish the genuineness of Daniel. But such is not my present purpose. Here I pose merely as an iconoclast, not as the exponent of a true creed. Ninety-nine people out of every hundred who accept the "critical view" of the book do so on the authority of scholars like Canon Driver. And my object is merely to show that the dicta of these distinguished men are not always trustworthy.

As everyone who is versed in the Daniel controversy is aware, our English scholars merely reproduce the case made out by foreign sceptics; and the sceptics have added but little to the old arguments of Porphyry the pagan. They start with the assumption that any book which records a miracle or contains a prophecy must be false; and their effort is, not to inquire whether Daniel is genuine, but to prove that it

is a forgery. They are compelled to maintain, therefore, that the book was written in the days of Antiochus, not earlier than the fourth decade of the second century B. C.

But if the case they have piled up in proof of this were as strong as it is feeble, a number of facts could be appealed to, any one of which would be sufficient to destroy it.

The first fact is the Jewish Canon. For the Canon included no book which was not believed to have been in existence in the time of Nehemiah. And it was closed *not later* than half a century after the death of Antiochus.<sup>1</sup> And yet, according to the "critical hypothesis," Daniel was written within the memory of men who finally settled the Canon.

The next fact is the Septuagint Version. For the Critics themselves admit that that version was made before First Maccabees was written, and the corruptions which mark it give proof that at the time when it was made Daniel was an ancient book.

Another fact is the book of Ecclesiasticus. For Daniel is cited by the Son of Sirach,<sup>2</sup> who wrote *at least* a quarter of a century before Antiochus began

<sup>1</sup> As to both points my authority is Dr. Ryle's "Canon of the Old Testament" (pp. 175 and 188). My argument depends on the *fact* of the Jewish belief, and that is not doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> Three quotations from the book of Daniel are cited by Dr. Schechter in his Introduction to "The Wisdom of Ben-Sira," but of course they are not accepted as quotations by the Critics. I beg to refer to my "Daniel in the Critics' Den," pp. 101-103 (1902 ed.).

to reign. And, I may add, the proof that the whole Jewish Canon was then already closed is almost adequate to satisfy even a hostile witness.<sup>1</sup>

And if these and other external facts could be disposed of, the ninth chapter would still bar the "critical hypothesis." For not even the subtle ingenuity of the sceptics, aided by a false punctuation of verse 25,<sup>2</sup> can get rid of the Messianic prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. This, however, only establishes the minor premise of their syllogism. Its major premise is that every book which professes to be a Divine prophecy is a fraud.

We hear *ad nauseam* of "the decisions of modern Biblical criticism." The wild vagaries of pseudo-Criticism abound; but a court entitled to give *decisions* in the name of true Criticism has never yet been constituted. "The assured results of the best and latest scholarship" include the rejection of the New Testament "as a tissue of deceptions and forgeries." Not so, we shall be told, for the decision these words express was yesterday's, not to-day's. And, as Dr. Harnack (whose they are) remarks, "That time is

<sup>1</sup> "Canon of the Old Testament," p. 313. In calling the Bishop of Winchester a hostile witness, I mean merely that he is on the side of the Critics.

<sup>2</sup> The *Athnah* accent in verse 25 might possibly be explained by the fact that the Jews never read the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in their synagogues, and any attempt to compute the period is anathema. But to make the Hebrew accent equivalent to our colon is a blunder. We should have to read verse 2: "I, Daniel, understood by the books: the number of the years," etc.



passed. For Science it was an episode in which it learned much, and after which it has much to forget." And, as this great writer adds—and no one can speak with more authority—"The oldest literature of the Church in all main points, and in most details, from the point of view of literary criticism, is genuine and trustworthy."<sup>1</sup>

"That time is passed." Yes, but even those of us who are not yet old can remember it. And the bed-roll of living scholars and theologians and critics contains no name more eminent than that of Ferdinand Christian Baur. In his day it was the New Testament which bore the brunt of the sceptical attack. To-day it is the Hebrew Scriptures. But if "the assured results of the best scholarship" of less than half a century ago are now dismissed as "an episode," our children may live to find the *Encyclopædia Biblica* and Dr. Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* relegated to the limbo of discredited and forgotten books.

Having regard to the acceptance and popularity of the now discarded labours of "the Tübingen School," the attitude which most of the leaders of the secular press maintain toward the pseudo-Criticism is as deplorable as it is amazing. For these enlightened persons veto the exercise of an independent judgment upon the subject, and insist on our accepting the dicta of the Critics with a subservience as abject as that rendered by Irish peasants to their priests.

The "assured results of modern criticism" are rejected by some Critics of the highest eminence. The

<sup>1</sup>"The Chronology of the Oldest Christian Literature."

late Professor Dillmann may be named in that category, together with his no less distinguished successor in the chair of theology in Berlin University, Professor Hermann Strack. On both sides of the Atlantic there are men of equal eminence as scholars and theologians who repudiate the pseudo-Criticism altogether. And this being so, educated men should either investigate the matter for themselves, or else they should hold their judgment in suspense.

Fine phrases about the assured results of the latest and best scholarship are therefore the merest clap-trap. And yet, when we seek to expose the patent errors of the pseudo-Criticism, no other reply is attempted by the press organs of the cultured classes which champion its cause. Professor Blank says so and so, and Professor Blank is this and that. Yes: "Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honourable man."

"The latest and best scholarship." Yes: "Your food will cost you more." The tiresome refrain by which the defenders of pseudo-Criticism would stifle discussion is as sapient as the parrot-cry by which the defenders of pseudo-free trade would prevent us from coming face to face with facts.

The parallel here suggested is a striking one. The great majority of thoughtful people are in favour of genuine free trade and of genuine free criticism. But in the one case as in the other, an agitation is making use of a title to which it has no honest claim. And it was just about the time when one-sided free trade gained ascendancy in England that one-sided free criticism began to make headway. The one system is

now upon its trial; and the time seems opportune to call the other to account. If it adhered to the methods of those who, acting under official responsibility, conduct judicial and police inquiries, the sceptical crusade against the Bible would shrink to narrow limits.

### CHAPTER III

**S**UPERIOR persons will no doubt object that the spirit in which this book is written is unsuited to a theological discussion. But the objectors mistake the author's purpose; which is not to discuss theology, but to explode fallacies and to expose frauds. Such is the humble and not unfamiliar task which he has here undertaken.

And superior persons are as unreasonable as the "children sitting in the market-place." Were the author to proceed to the calm and sober discussion of theological questions, they would tell him that, being a mere layman, he is not entitled to a hearing. But the only condition on which he could obtain episcopal ordination would be his giving an affirmative answer to the plain question, "Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?" Once, however, a man becomes a clergyman by giving this pledge solemnly and publicly he is entitled to be heard, even though he sets himself to persuade people that the Scriptures are *not* to be believed. A man who honestly accepted such a pledge and then found his career imperilled by a change of views might well deserve our pity. And if he maintained a studied silence on the subject, he might not forfeit our respect. But when men obtain ordination by declaring their belief of the Bible, and then upon the very house-

tops proclaim their unbelief, their attitude and conduct seem to call for some sort of apology or explanation.

Let me give an illustration. In a treatise written by a foreign infidel nine passages are singled out as being the "credible elements" in the Four Gospels, and of these he says: "They prove that in the person of Jesus we have to do with a completely human being, and that the Divine is to be sought in him only in the form in which it is capable of being found in a man; they also prove that he really did exist, and that the Gospels contain at least some absolutely trustworthy facts concerning him."<sup>1</sup>

"*A completely human being,*" mark. Not only is the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ denied, but His Divinity also, even in the modified sense acknowledged by devout Unitarians. Christianity thus becomes a huge fraud, and the Christian's faith a sheer delusion.

If such statements were reproduced to warn us against the excesses of the pseudo-Criticism and the blindness and folly of profane apostates, most of us would deprecate their publication in England. But as a matter of fact, the article from which those words are quoted appears in a standard theological work, bearing the *imprimatur* of a Canon of the Church of England and a Professor of Oxford University.

And the *Encyclopædia Biblica* differs only in degree from the *Dictionary of the Bible*, of which Canon Driver, also a Professor of Oxford, is one of the editors. These and other kindred works designed to destroy belief of the Bible are written or edited by

<sup>1</sup> *Encyc. Bib.*, art. "Gospels." The writer proceeds to enumerate nine credible passages in the Four Gospels!

men who command attention just because of their holding a position gained by their declaring their unfeigned belief of the Bible.

Their attitude and conduct, I repeat, are an enigma. That an adequate explanation of them can be given is a natural inference from their high personal character. And when they deign to offer it, all fair and generous minds will be relieved and gratified. Meanwhile is it strange if "mere laymen" are perplexed? For it is certain that their views of morality in such matters do not run altogether on the same lines as those which prevail in the Clubs, or even in the City.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not impugning the character of the distinguished ecclesiastics and scholars who lead the pseudo-Criticism movement in this country. But I wish plainly to suggest that they do not view matters quite in the same way as other men. My words are not to be misread as a veiled attack on their integrity or their honour. They are intended as a frank and open impeachment of their judgment. My object is to secure a fair field in this controversy. Hence my protest against the "Brutus-says-he-was-ambitious" guillotine which is now used to silence all remonstrance and stifle all discussion.

In certain quarters, I doubt not, this impeachment and this protest will provoke a sneer. I shall be ridiculed for setting up my own judgment against that of the scholars and the ecclesiastics. But that is not quite fair. Surely I have made my meaning clear. My contention is, not that I personally am better fitted than they are to deal with difficult questions of conflicting evidence, but that this is true of any man who, in any

capacity, whether as judge or magistrate, or lawyer or juror, has experience of judicial inquiries.

If I seem to labour this point, it is because the success of all religious frauds—the pseudo-Criticism not excepted—depends on preventing “the laity” from thinking for themselves. My own case will illustrate this. It was Professor Driver’s “Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament” which first shook my faith in the Bible. The “Daniel” section very specially influenced me. His case against the book seemed complete; and not being a Hebrew scholar, I felt myself incompetent to review his decisions.

It was some time before I recovered from the shock; but when I began to regain my breath, my recovery was hastened by a counter-shock. The pivot on which the whole case turned was the presence of Greek words in the book; and when I discovered that on this vital point the argument was either an anachronism or a puerility,<sup>1</sup> I determined to prove the matter further.

But what about the Hebrew? Lawyers have too much sense to waste time over anything conceded by the other side. And while to his assertion that “the Greek words *demand*” a verdict against Daniel, Professor Driver adds that “the Hebrew *supports*” the same conclusion, Professor Cheyne, quite as competent a Hebraist, and far more uncompromising as a critic, expressly declares that “From the Hebrew of

<sup>1</sup> Canon Driver’s words are, “The Greek words *demand*, the Hebrew *supports*, and the Aramaic *permits*,” a late date. The whole argument, therefore, turns on the presence of the Greek words.

the book of Daniel no important inference as to its date can be safely drawn."

This was enough for me. The philology being thus ruled out, I was face to face with allegations of fact, and inferences from evidence. And, inflated with conceit engendered by remembering that, in problems of that kind, people quite as clever as the professors sometimes seemed to value my opinion and advice, I decided to examine the whole matter for myself.

My judgment had been overawed by the great authority of Dr. Driver's name. For I supposed his treatise to be the result of independent inquiry and thought. My next shock was the discovery that it was merely a reproduction of the case made out by the foreign Rationalists long ago.

And when this was followed by the further discovery that recent archæological research had proved that his main "Historical Errors" were not errors at all—that, for example, Cyrus's own inscriptions tell us that Belshazzar actually ruled in Babylon, as the Bible says he did, and that he was killed when the Mede who commanded the invading army captured the city and set up the Persian rule—I began to think it was high time to inquire what could be said upon the other side. And my efforts were rewarded by finding an array of solid facts, as set forth in the preceding chapter, sufficient to convince any competent tribunal that the "critical hypothesis" is untenable.

I appeal to my readers, therefore, to use their own judgment in this controversy. And when superior persons attempt to overawe them by the "Brutus-says-he-was-ambitious" refrain about "the latest and



best scholarship," let them remember, first, that the scholarship is neither good nor modern; and, secondly, that it is not a question of scholarship at all, but of *evidence*, requiring no knowledge of Hebrew whatever, but only intelligence and shrewdness, and what is called a "level head."

There is absolutely nothing new in this sceptical crusade against the Bible. English scholars have made no contribution to it, save only the sanction of their names. And when, half a century ago, it began to leaven religious thought in this country, its course was predicted by those who knew its progress in the land of its origin.

If a man of good repute is bluntly denounced as a drunkard or a rogue by one who is known to be his enemy, his character may be left to take care of itself. But if a charge of dishonesty or excess is made with great reserve and seeming reluctance by one who poses as his friend, and who declares his esteem for him and his earnest wish to screen him, most people will take for granted there is some foundation for it.

And so it is here. When foreign sceptics assailed the Bible they were ignored. But now that English Christians join in the attack, people begin to think there must be something in it. Among the educated classes indeed there is not one person in a hundred who accepts their conclusions. But there is not one person in a thousand who is not in some degree influenced by their teaching. And as a result the cultured classes are drifting towards a kind of religious agnosticism. And when these pestilent errors have fully penetrated to the unthinking multitude, they

will lead to an agnosticism with no saving element whatever—an agnosticism which will soon develop into practical atheism. In this generation the pseudo-Criticism is undermining the faith of the Church; in the next it may affect the fabric of Society.

## CHAPTER IV

**W**HEN the Fenians planned their second raid on Canada no fears were entertained as to the final issue of the plot. But the defence of a frontier of more than a thousand miles was an impossible task for the Dominion Government. I undertook, therefore, to ascertain at what point the raiders meant to cross. How I succeeded, with Le Caron's help, is now a matter of history; and a movement which threatened much injury to property, and possibly loss of life, ended in a fiasco.

In the guerilla war now raging round the Bible the sacred volume lies open to attack on every side. But here the parallel ends. For it is impossible to fix the field on which the battle must be joined. The pending controversy, therefore, finds a fitter illustration in the final stages of the late Boer War. On all the main questions raised by the pseudo-Critics they have been refuted by books as scholarly and able as any which they themselves have written. It is not their way, however, to make either admissions or rejoinders. But they turn up again unabashed. And, as we have seen, their chief successes have been largely due to their habit of "wearing khaki."

It taxed the energies of nearly a quarter of a million Imperial troops to suppress the Boers. To suppress the Critics would be a task of infinitely

greater difficulty; and I am not so vain as to suppose that this volume will have any effect in that direction. But many a skirmish that failed to crush De Wet did much to cheer the loyalists in South Africa, and possibly these pages may serve in some little measure to encourage perplexed and timorous Christians.

My method so far has been clear, and I wish to make my method in the sequel quite as plain. It is not my purpose to discuss Biblical problems, save incidentally, and as the subject may require; but I propose to test the pseudo-Criticism by its results in the case of certain specially selected representative men.

First, however, some prefatory words of another kind may be opportune. Let no one suppose that the Bible itself has suffered by this crusade against its authority, or that the defence of the Bible is a lost or discredited cause. Some of us indeed, whose faith has been endangered by this scepticism, have emerged from the ordeal with a deeper confidence in the Bible than before—deeper, because more intelligent.

But let us be careful to distinguish between the Bible itself, and the meaning which men put upon its words. If orthodoxy were not so self-sufficient in interpreting the Scriptures, heterodoxy would make less headway than it does. For many a heresy is due to recoil from some perversion of the truth. As a recent writer has pleaded, even an apostasy so extreme as that which found expression in the words *écrasez l'infâme*, denoted hatred, not of Christ, but of superstition; not of the Christianity of the New Testament, but of the religion of Christendom—"the religion

which lit the fires of Smithfield and prompted the tortures of the Inquisition.”<sup>1</sup>

The well-worn theme of the Creation story may illustrate my meaning. How many there are who have turned away from it because they were taught to read into it the figment that on a certain Sunday morning in the year B. C. 4004, the Supreme looked out upon the dark vault of illimitable empty space, and that by the Friday evening following he had started this universe of ours as a “going concern”!

Take another illustration of a different kind. The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, tradition has labelled “Enlargement of the Church.” Such an exegesis supports the worst pretensions of the Church of Rome; and it justifies the most “advanced” of the Critics in their unbelief. If the passage is meant to describe the return from the Exile, it is but the ravings of a fanatic. And to regard it as a prophecy about the Church of Christendom, is profanely to ascribe to God the language of wild hyperbole and senseless exaggeration.

Again, let us remember—I make use of borrowed words—that “no book can be written on behalf of the Bible like the Bible itself.” But the witness of the Bible, like all Divine rewards, is only for diligent seekers. “Orthodoxy” has prepared the way for scepticism, not merely by misinterpreting the Bible, but by neglect of it. The study of prophecy has been disparaged, and the teaching of the types has been ignored. No one who has studied the history of Divine prophecy could be misled by the theory that the prophetic books were earlier than the Pentateuch.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. S. G. Tallentyre’s “Life of Voltaire,” vol. ii. p. 110.

And no one acquainted with the marvellous system of Biblical typology, to which the Epistle to the Hebrews gives the clue, would tolerate the figment that the Mosaic books are forgeries.

“Science is only in its infancy” is the dictum of one who has attained to rank and fame in the pursuit of it.<sup>1</sup> And this is no less true of our apprehension of the Bible. No book, indeed, is so little understood. And in forecasting the advance which future years will make in knowledge of the work of God in nature, the same writer uses language which we may adopt in regard to the Word of God in revelation: “Still before them will loom the majestic vision of the Infinite, and still will their men of highest knowledge and deepest insight confess they are but as children who have learned to play on the seashore, while the great ocean of truth still stretches before them unexplored: still will they feel that they are but dimly groping after the great truths of God.”

This leads me to emphasise a further warning. The Christian must be on his guard against allowing the initial assumption of the Critics, that the Bible is to be treated as a purely human book. I have used elsewhere the illustration of the Lincoln church bazaar, where two stolen purses were found in the Bishop's pocket. If the Bishop had been dealt with like a crossing-sweeper or a shoe-black, he would certainly have been sent to the lock-up. And such treatment would not have been worse than that which the Critics accord to the Bible.

And let it not be overlooked that when “Higher

<sup>1</sup> Sir Oliver Lodge.

Criticism" claims to rule out miracles it passes entirely beyond the limits of its proper province. Eichhorn himself defined it to mean the analysis of a book into its earlier and its later elements. This leaves untouched every question as to the nature of the book thus submitted to examination. The present wave of scepticism is not caused by the search-light of a true criticism, but by the illicit excesses of a false criticism designed to throw discredit upon miracles, not excepting Inspiration and the Virgin birth—the very foundations of Christianity.

Miracles? the lowest and stupidest type of anthropomorphist is the man whose god can do nothing that he could not do himself. And even the disciples of Hume now avoid their master's dictum about violation of natural law. Indeed, as the late Duke of Argyll told Professor Huxley, the antithesis between natural and supernatural is not only unknown to revelation, but it is "very bad science, and still worse philosophy." What we call a miracle implies the presence of some agent, or the exercise of some power, that is more than human. To challenge and sift the evidence is therefore proof of shrewdness and wisdom. But a man who rejects a miracle on *a priori* grounds, and refuses to examine the evidence, must obviously be either an atheist or a fool.<sup>1</sup>

And, if this be admitted, the great miracle of the

<sup>1</sup>Hume admitted that the evidence for one of the most notable of the Jansenist miracles in France was complete on every point on which he challenged the New Testament miracles. But yet he rejected it on purely *a priori* grounds; and from his standpoint he was possibly right.

Incarnation, so plainly revealed in Scripture, presents no special difficulties. It is free indeed from those elements of incredibility attaching to that other miracle which we all accept—the new birth of a sinner by the Spirit of God. And it will probably be found that those who regard the “Virgin birth” as a mere legend, regard the “new birth” as a mere theory.

I will venture to offer a novel statement of this question. In giving a legal opinion a lawyer neither questions nor confirms the facts set out in the case submitted to him. He assumes them, and his opinion is based on that assumption. Now I should like to submit the following question to the judgment of some upright and intelligent infidel, who would answer it with the impartiality of a lawyer dealing with a “case.” The Christian system rests on the fact that the Nazarene was the Son of God; assuming that fact, is there anything unreasonable in the hypothesis of the Virgin birth? His answer would be: If the “fact” is to be accepted the birth was presumably miraculous, and the suggested hypothesis is a reasonable one.<sup>1</sup>

That the child of a woman was the Son of God is a great mystery; that the child of Joseph the carpenter was the Son of God is sheer nonsense. No free and fearless thinker, therefore, rejects belief in the Virgin birth, and yet maintains belief in the Deity of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Those who refuse belief in a primeval revelation to account for the legend of a Virgin birth in Old World paganism, must find in that legend a proof that belief in a Divine offspring necessarily implies belief in a miraculous birth.

<sup>2</sup> Of course the expression may still be used in a loose and figurative sense, as, *e. g.*, by Dr. Harnack,



Adam was the son of God in a sense in which no one of his posterity can claim the title. Christ was the Son of God in a sense far higher still. For Adam came into existence by the *fiat* of the Creator; while our Divine Lord could speak to the Father of "the glory which he had with Him before the world was."<sup>1</sup> Hence the words, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is of heaven."<sup>2</sup>

In doctrine as in morals, one fault leads to another. And the denial of the Virgin birth follows upon the figment of redemption by incarnation—that evil leaven of Greek philosophy. The nature which He took was not that of sinful man—albeit "He was made *in the likeness* of sinful flesh"—but of man as he came from the hand of God.

And as for Inspiration, the real question here is whether we possess a Divine revelation; and, as has been justly said, the idea of a revelation is involved in the conception of a living God. For here, as the same writer argues, "Agnosticism assumes a double incompetence—the incompetence not only of man to know God, but of God to make Himself known. But the denial of competence is the negation of Deity. For the God who could not speak would not be rational, and the God who would not speak would not be moral."<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, it is not inspiration that tries the Christian's faith, but its strange limits; not miracles, but the absence of miracles. Why is God so

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 47, R. V.

<sup>3</sup> The words are Principal Fairbairn's ("The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," p. 386).

silent? How is it that Almighty power is passive in a world where sorrow and suffering prevail, and sin and wrong are rampant?<sup>1</sup> To these difficulties enlightened faith can find an answer. But it does not lie upon the surface. It must be sought for as men dig for gold. And even when it has been grasped, and reason bows before the teaching of revelation, the cravings of the inner being still refuse to be satisfied, and "heart and flesh cry out for the Living God."

<sup>1</sup>This is the main subject of the author's "Silence of God."

## CHAPTER V

**T**HE pioneers of the Higher Criticism, as already noticed, turned aside to undertake the task of commending the Bible to the Rationalists. Their aim was laudable, but the method by which they sought to attain it was utterly mistaken. For in the sphere of faith, as in that of morals, all compromise is impossible.

But the parallel suggested by these words must not be pressed. The religion of the superstitious sceptic, who swallows a camel while he strains at a gnat, is deserving only of contempt. But I would dissociate myself from those who despise the honest and fair agnostic. Science and religion are both alike intolerant of all who refuse to accept their decrees. But the intelligent and sincere Rationalist is entitled to respect and courtesy. ) ! !

In this spirit it is that I would enter on the consideration of the position and views of one of the great scholars and thinkers of the day—I refer to Dr. Harnack, Principal of the University of Berlin. And “What is Christianity?” is the work which I select for analysis. In Germany, of course, the book is widely read, and a translation has introduced it to the English public. My purpose is to show that the author of this volume has achieved the task which Eichhorn

attempted, and that, in his case, the pseudo "Higher Criticism" has led to absolute Rationalism.

The note which dominates the treatise is struck on the opening page. His purpose is "to remind mankind" "that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst." Not that "a man of the name of Jesus," who "once stood in their midst," is the Christ, the Lord of Glory—this is the very foundation of Christianity—but that the life and teaching of "the historic Jesus" deserve the attention of mankind.

*A man of the name of Jesus Christ.* Not only does the author fail to acknowledge Him as the Lord Jesus Christ, but throughout this book he abstains from using even the title that is so familiar to the Christian. We need not be surprised, therefore, at his telling us that the question, "What is Christianity?" does not find answer in the Divine revelation of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the sum and substance, but resolves itself into "the purely historical theme: What is the Christian religion?"<sup>1</sup>

The spiritual Christian has learned to distinguish between Christianity and "the Christian religion," but Dr. Harnack makes no such distinction. For not even "the historic Jesus" Himself will afford "the materials" for his inquiry; "we must include the first generation of His disciples as well."<sup>2</sup> Nor will even this suffice. For, he tells us, "Jesus Christ and His disciples were situated in their day just as we are situated in ours; that is to say, their feelings, their thoughts, their judgments, and their efforts were bounded by the horizon and the framework in which

<sup>1</sup> pp. 6, 9.

<sup>2</sup> p. 10.

their own nation was set, and by its condition at the time."<sup>1</sup> This being so, our "materials" must not be limited even to the life and teaching of "Jesus Christ and His disciples": to ascertain aright what is Christianity "we must include all the later products of its spirit."<sup>2</sup>

But, of course, "Jesus Christ" and His "message" are of principal importance. What, then, are "our authorities" here? The answer is, *in words*, "the first three Gospels."<sup>3</sup> "In words," I say; for let no one suppose that he may accept any one of the three as trustworthy. Before the worshipper can betake himself to the sanctuary he must repair to the professor's classroom to learn how much or how little of all on which his faith rests has escaped in the general wreck.

Our first staggering blow will be the discovery that "the history of Jesus' birth" is worthless. "Two of the Gospels do, it is true, contain it," but yet "we may disregard it."<sup>4</sup> The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, must thus give place to Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph; a man whose mind was warped by a petty provincial environment,<sup>5</sup> whose religious teaching, therefore, taxes our ingenuity to discriminate between the element of kernel and of husk;<sup>6</sup> a man who believed in such "absurdities" as "stories of demons,"<sup>7</sup> and whose views on social questions were biassed by "his eschatological ideas and his particular horizon."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 12.<sup>4</sup> p. 30.<sup>7</sup> p. 58.<sup>2</sup> p. 10.<sup>5</sup> p. 12.<sup>8</sup> p. 101.<sup>3</sup> p. 19.<sup>6</sup> p. 55.

The next blow to faith will be the discovery that the resurrection is a mere "belief." Here the language used is that of Christianity, but that is all. "Whatever may have happened at the grave and in the matter of the appearances, one thing is certain," we are told, "this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal."<sup>1</sup> "Whatever may have happened"; for, as the author says, "It is not our business to defend either the view which was taken of the death, or the idea that He had risen again."<sup>2</sup>

"Views" and "ideas," not *facts*. The only facts left us are that there was once "a man called Jesus Christ," and that He died upon a cross. "The conviction that obtained in the Apostolic age that the Lord had really appeared after His death on the cross may," Dr. Harnack tells us, "be regarded as a coefficient."<sup>3</sup> It is not that the *fact* of the appearances was "a coefficient," but merely the belief that there were appearances. And this distinction is emphasised by the context. For this statement immediately follows a reference to the "coefficient" of a mistaken expectation of Christ's near return.

"The Christian religion," so-called, abounds with delusions and frauds, and Dr. Harnack's "Christianity" is no better. "That Jesus' death on the cross was one of expiation" is also an "idea."<sup>4</sup> It belongs to a class of ideas that "respond to a religious need."<sup>5</sup> And, as the author adds, "History has decided in its favour, and we are beginning to get in touch with it."

<sup>1</sup> p. 162.    <sup>2</sup> p. 155.    <sup>3</sup> p. 173.    <sup>4</sup> p. 156.    <sup>5</sup> p. 157.

More than this, "Everywhere that the just man suffers, an atonement is made which puts us to shame and purifies us."<sup>1</sup> "These are the ideas which have been suggested by Christ's death," and "they have taken shape in the firm conviction that by His death in suffering He did a definitive work; that He did it 'for us.'"<sup>2</sup>

Then there are the miracles. A friend of mine once averted a disaster by "healing" a man upon whom the safety of a party of travellers depended. Their hale, rough, mountain guide was seized with a sudden illness, and lay down to die. By the use of a strong will, and a bottle of hair-wash from his valise, he had the man on his feet again in half an hour. I once got him to tell the whole story to the late Sir Andrew Clark, and I remember well the response it evoked, uttered in Sir Andrew's staccato style: "I thoroughly believe in a gift of healing." So also does Professor Harnack; and thus he is able to accept what I may call the everyday miracles of the ministry. For, he tells us, "Historical science in the last generation has taken a great step in advance by learning to pass a more intelligent and benevolent judgment on those narratives."<sup>3</sup>

And yet, with strange inconsistency, he writes:—

"It is not miracles that matter; the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> p. 30.

Now this entirely explodes the infidel argument against miracles. For the seeming force of that argument depends on the fallacy that a miracle is a violation of the laws of Nature, whereas in fact it is but "the introduction of a new agent possessing new powers." Once we acknowledge a God who rules and governs and can "compel Nature,"<sup>1</sup> the credibility of Divine miracles resolves itself into a question of evidence, and a refusal on *a priori* grounds to examine the evidence betokens sheer materialism or stupidity.

Take Joshua's miracle, for example. "That the earth in its course stood still" (Dr. Harnack declares) "we shall never again believe."<sup>2</sup> Some of us who did once believe it have given it up. For the Bible does not state it. Joshua's prayer was that the sun might "be silent." And the record of what follows explains this Hebrew figure of speech: "The sun was silent in the half of the heaven, and *hasted not to go down* a whole day." It is incongruous to say that "the sun *stood still* and *hasted not to go down*." When we say that a man did not haste to catch a train, we imply, not that he sat down, but that he went to the station slowly. And so here: the sun lingered in the [visible] half<sup>3</sup> of the heaven. And if we believe in a God who

<sup>1</sup> Nature is, of course, but one sphere of God's government, and, therefore, to speak of God's "compelling Nature" seems incongruous. Upon this whole question of miracles I take the liberty of referring to my book, "The Silence of God," especially chapter iii.

<sup>2</sup> p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> The word is so rendered with rare exceptions in all its one hundred and seventeen occurrences. The rendering "in the midst" suggests the grotesque idea that at noonday Joshua



has power over "Nature," His retarding the rotation of the earth does not seem more wonderful than an engineer's "slowing down" the great wheel of a steam engine.

Professor Harnack's purpose being to reduce the facts and the phenomena of what he calls "Christianity" to the level of Rationalism, he reads the New Testament with a predetermination to refuse everything which clashes with his own system. Not only, therefore, is the story of the birth rejected, but also that wonderful narrative which he dismisses as "a curious story of a temptation." And the Messiahship, the eternal Sonship, and the Atonement are, like the Resurrection, relegated to the category of "ideas."

The Gospel of John, of course, goes overboard. It "does not emanate from the Apostle John," and it "cannot be taken as an historical authority in the ordinary sense of the word."<sup>1</sup> The genuineness of the Fourth Gospel is too well established to be dismissed in this jaunty way by a wave of the hand. But let that pass. A sceptic both by temperament and by training, I propose to examine his scheme from the standpoint of thorough, relentless scepticism.

And let no one be either stumbled or offended by my words. When I here speak of "Jesus" I am referring to Dr. Harnack's Buddha, the mythical founder and hero of his Neo-Christianity.

gave a drill-sergeant command to the sun to halt, and it stood still! Common sense might tell us that the need would not arise till the sun was sinking, and it became clear that the approach of night would enable the enemy to escape.

<sup>1</sup> p. 19.

“The teaching of Jesus” is the basis of it. But what do we know of His teaching? Let me test this by an illustration. The Judge’s charge to the Grand Jury in opening the assizes for a county always commands attention in Ireland. And for some years I used to supply the leading Dublin newspapers with reports of all such charges delivered on the circuit to which I was attached as a barrister. I could not write shorthand; but by recording the key-words of every sentence I was able to furnish a verbatim report from memory. On the only occasion that my accuracy was ever challenged, the Judge himself confirmed it when appealed to. I found, however, that if even a few hours intervened the spell was broken, and I could not attempt more than a *précis*. And after the lapse of months, or even weeks, I should have hesitated to supply a *précis*. But here we are asked to believe that men who had no special aptitude for such a task, and who, we are told, are not always to be trusted even when they record events that occurred before their eyes, transcribed, long after they were uttered, the very words of prolonged discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount. Was there ever a suggestion more utterly unworthy of acceptance by sensible people! Is it not clear as light that Matthew is the real author of the Sermon on the Mount?<sup>1</sup>

But this is not all. Put the question to any Chris-

<sup>1</sup> Of course I am arguing on Dr. Harnack’s assumption that the Gospels are mere human documents, and not divinely inspired. The question of inspiration is too large for discussion here. I beg to refer to my book, “The Bible and Modern Criticism,” especially chaps. vii. and xiii.

tian, "If you were forced to give up three of the Gospels, which would you retain?" and the prompt and unequivocal reply is always "JOHN." To the Christian the words of the great Teacher as recorded in the Fourth Gospel are more precious than all the rest. But "the author of it"—Dr. Harnack tells us—"drew up the discourses himself, and illustrated great thoughts by imaginary situations."

This suggests a conclusion of the most startling kind. If the Fourth Gospel is not genuine and authentic, the fact confronts us that the "discourses" of "that sublimest of sublime books" have, throughout the whole Christian era, exercised a wider and profounder influence over the minds and hearts of men than the sayings of "Jesus" Himself. It has often happened in the world's history that the real leader in a great movement has been overshadowed by someone whose personal magnetism has secured for him greater popularity.

And this unknown disciple is not the only claimant to pre-eminence. That the author of this Gospel, which some would call the greatest book in the world—a book, moreover, written at such a time—should not have left even a tradition of his personality or name, is a supposition which tries even a trained capacity for misbelief. But his anonymity would tell against him in a plebiscite. In Paul, on the other hand, we have a man whose matchless life-story lies before us, not only in his own Epistles, but in the narrative of Luke. His unreserved and passionate devotion to his Master only serves to increase his hold upon our respect and admiration. Is it so clear a case, then, that

the modern Jew is wrong in saying that Paul was the founder of Christianity? His was "the boldest enterprise," Dr. Harnack tells us; and he ventured upon it "without being able to appeal to a single word of his Master's."<sup>1</sup>

Then, again, the claims of Peter cannot be ignored. Nor am I sure that, in the view of not a few, these popular candidates for the chiefship would not be overshadowed by the tragic figure of the Baptist. At all events the question is worth looking into by the light of Professor Harnack's scheme. And it will probably be found that the grounds on which some would veto the discussion have less weight than they suppose.

It may be demanded, for example, "Was not Jesus the Messiah? Was it not He who preached the Kingdom? Was He not the Son of God? Did He not die for men? Was it not He who brought the message of the Gospel?" Now all this may prove to be no more than an appeal to the prejudices created by traditional beliefs. Let us examine it in the clear light of the "latest scholarship and modern thought."

"Jesus" was the Messiah. Yes, but what does this imply? We are told that the discovery was forced on Him when He had "settled accounts with Himself." It was the solution of "a surging chaos of disparate feeling as well as of contradictory theory."<sup>2</sup> This "theory," moreover, was connected with the "kingdom"; and this again "Jesus took from the religious traditions of His nation."<sup>3</sup> "The idea of the two

<sup>1</sup> p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> p. 52.

kingdoms, of God and of the devil, . . . was an idea which Jesus simply shared with His contemporaries. He did not start it, but He grew up in it, and He retained it.”<sup>1</sup> No, it was John the Baptist who not only started it, but gave it definite form. Not that this matters much, for the whole conception springs from Jewish tradition and ignorance: “Ultimately the Kingdom is nothing but the treasure which the soul possesses in the eternal and merciful God.”<sup>2</sup>

Well, but “Jesus” was the Son of God. Yes, but let us not forget what we have already learned. This is merely an “idea,” not a fact. As a matter of fact, He was the son of Joseph of Nazareth. In this connection “the name of Son, rightly understood, means nothing but the knowledge of God. . . . Jesus is convinced that He knows God in a way in which no one ever knew Him before.”<sup>3</sup> Hence His claim to be the Son of God.

But this is not “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—we have drifted very far from such a conception as that—but merely “the God whom Jesus Christ *called* His Father, and who is also our Father.”<sup>4</sup> It is not that He has raised us to a higher level, but that He stands beside us on the level of our common humanity. He knew God better than other men, that is all.

But, it will be urged, does not the message that He brought decide the question—“a glad message assuring us of life eternal,”<sup>5</sup> a message that brings to us “the certainty of redemption, humility, and joy in

<sup>1</sup> p. 54.<sup>2</sup> p. 77.<sup>3</sup> p. 128.<sup>4</sup> p. 301.<sup>5</sup> p. 146.

God"?<sup>1</sup> High-sounding words these, but let us examine them. Dr. Harnack analyses the "message" for us. It relates to three spheres, he tells us, which in fact "coalesce." And these are "the Kingdom of God, God as the Father and the infinite value of the human soul, and the higher righteousness showing itself in love."<sup>2</sup>

But what is this "higher righteousness"? To love God and our neighbour. Surely the true Rationalist will enter a protest here. The light of Nature will teach us *that*. That cold light, indeed, will neither solve the mystery of our strange incapacity to obey the law of our being, nor yet give us strength to fulfil that law. For Nature has no word of either help or pity in the case of failure, albeit its voice is clear on behalf of truth and good and right, and against error and evil and wrong.

And the Christian will join with the Rationalist in his protest; for this is precisely what he means when he describes the Decalogue as "the *moral* law." The "New Commandment" was not to love a neighbour, but to love a fellow-disciple according to the standard of the Master's love. The fact is that Dr. Harnack's contempt for the Old Testament and its "capricious and war-like Jehovah"<sup>3</sup> has led him to forget that the law of love to a neighbour was preached in the Pentateuch, and that in proclaiming it "Jesus" was avowedly quoting Moses.

The same cause, perhaps, has blinded him to the fact that "the Kingdom," as he conceives it, is taught as

<sup>1</sup> p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> p. 76.

fully in the Old Testament as in the New. For if "the Kingdom is nothing but the treasure which the soul possesses in the eternal and merciful God,"<sup>1</sup> the fact is indisputable that the worship of hearts that have possessed this treasure has always found its truest and fullest expression in the language of the Psalms.

There was nothing new, then, in the message in so far as it related to "the Kingdom" and the "higher righteousness." But the third sphere remains. We are told that "the Gospel is the knowledge and recognition of God as the Father"; and still more definitely, that "God's Fatherhood is the main article in Jesus' message." That is, of course, the relationship of Father as existing between God and all mankind, for no other is recognised in Dr. Harnack's scheme.

Now, anyone with a concordance at hand can ascertain that, unless it be the relationship between God and men in virtue of creation, the Bible knows nothing of universal Fatherhood; and further, that this relationship formed no part of the Gospel "message." Indeed there was no need for such a "message." Even the heathen recognised Fatherhood in that sense. The Apostle Paul, therefore, in addressing Athenian idolaters could appeal to it, adopting the very words of their own poets, "For we are also his offspring." And the Jew already possessed the truth of Fatherhood in a far higher sense in connection with the covenant.

There was nothing new, therefore, in the conception of the Divine Fatherhood, any more than in that of "the Kingdom" or of "the law of love." But what

<sup>1</sup> p. 77.

was characteristic in the teaching of the New Testament was that Divine grace admitted those who were in a special sense "disciples"<sup>1</sup> to a relationship which depended neither on creation nor yet on the covenant, but on a new birth by the Divine Spirit. That this sonship was strictly limited to those who were thus "born again" is the plain teaching of the Fourth Gospel. But no more emphatic denial of the figment of universal Fatherhood in this sphere will be found in the Fourth Gospel than is contained in the following words recorded by the Synoptists: "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."<sup>2</sup> The fact is that Dr. Harnack studies the Bible with a mind so entirely prepossessed by what he expects and intends to find there, that he reads into the Gospels a doctrine which they expressly condemn, and fails to find what lies open on the surface.

And now it is high time to pause that we may consider whether anything is left to support the Nazarene's claims to transcendent homage. "What is there left us?" our author may well demand. I own I cannot see anything is left us, unless it be the tradition of an ideal life, to serve as a pattern of all good for all time. And as we stand amid the wreck of everything on which the Christian faith has rested during all the centuries, it is impossible to keep back the fear

<sup>1</sup>In taking the Sermon on the Mount as addressed to the multitude, Dr. Harnack overlooks the first verse of Matthew v.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22.



lest that life too may prove to be nothing but a mere "idea"—the splendid dream of those noble and generous enthusiasts who imagined that the son of Joseph was the Son of God.

Of the Greek Church Professor Harnack writes that it took the form "not of a Christian product in Greek dress, but of a Greek product in Christian dress." And of his own scheme we may aver that it is not Christianity in the foreign garb of Rationalism, but Rationalism disguised in Christian language.

"What is there left us?" we may well exclaim. And from being an inquiry for discussion the words become the cry of our despair. What is there left? The Christ of God? But this, we are told, is no more than an "idea," the creation of the mind of Paul. Here are Dr. Harnack's words: "Paul became the author of the speculative idea that not only was God in Christ, but that Christ Himself was possessed of a peculiar nature of a heavenly kind." In a word, that Christ was something more than Joseph's son.

"The Gospel?" Yes, but not "the Gospel of our salvation"—that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." This, too, is but a Pauline "idea." His was "the Gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." But "the Gospel as Jesus proclaimed it," Dr. Harnack insists with all the emphasis of italic type, "*has to do with the Father only, and not with the Son.*"

And let no one suppose that the foregoing quotations give an unfair impression of the author's scheme. Here is the concluding sentence of his book. It is the summary and the climax of all that has gone before,

and it has manifestly been framed with elaborate care:—

“If with a steady will we affirm the forces and the standards which on the summits of our inner life shine out as our highest good, nay, as our real self; if we are earnest and courageous enough to accept them as the great Reality and direct our lives by them; and if we then look at the course of mankind’s history, follow its upward development, and search, in strenuous and patient service for the communion of minds in it, we shall not faint in weariness and despair, but become certain of God, of the God whom Jesus Christ called His Father, and who is also our Father.”

Such, then, is the authoritative answer to the question, “What is there left us?” Let me contrast the closing passage of Dr. Harnack’s treatise on “Christianity” with the closing passage of Cicero’s treatise on “Old Age.” In view of the heathen doctrine of the immortality of the soul the pagan puts from him the desire to live his life over again. He refuses, “after having run his course, to be called back from the goal to the starting-place.” And he adds:—

“I retire from this world as it were from an inn, and not as if from a home, for Nature has assigned it to us as an hotel for sojourn, and not as a ‘local habitation.’ O glorious day! when I shall set out on my journey to that divine conclave and company of spirits, and when to this troubled, this polluted scene I shall bid farewell!”

The reader can judge between the Roman paganism of 2000 years ago and the German “Christianity” of to-day. The one seems instinct with brightness and hope; the other aims no higher than to rescue us from “weariness and despair.”

'And can it avail even for this? What message has it for the ordinary man of the world, who, being neither a Pharisee nor a fool, is conscious that he is a sinner and needs forgiveness? And this just because he is "certain of God, the God whom Jesus Christ called His Father," the God of the Bible, "the faithful God who keepeth judgment and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations." But he has *not* loved Him, neither has he kept His commandments, but broken them.

Even if he is better than his neighbours, and has habitually tried to please God, he is oppressed by a sense of utter failure. And if he has lived like other men, the warning of conscience is still plainer and louder. It is not "the certainty of God" that he craves, for he is intelligent enough to know that Nature is but another name for God, and that Nature is stern and pitiless in punishing. Nothing will satisfy him but the certainty of a *Saviour*. And when Dr. Harnack speaks of "the summits of his inner life" and the "upward development of mankind's history," the words only mock him. In other circumstances, perhaps, they might interest and amuse him; but in view of the realities of eternity they seem to savour of mere levity. Even a Romish priest with his crucifix would be a more welcome visitor.

And his preference would be right. For the position of Romanism to-day is akin to that of Judaism in Messianic times. It has not renounced the truth, but it "holds it down in unrighteousness." The great doctrines of the Christian faith remain—the Deity of

Christ, redemption through His blood, the Divine authority of Holy Scripture—but they are corrupted and concealed by a mass of human traditions and error. Many a devout Romanist, therefore, may be acknowledged as a fellow-Christian. But infidelity absolutely separates from Christ. It is not a mere perversion of the faith; it is a denial of it. Apostate Christianity is not so hopeless as an apostasy that utterly undermines Christianity.

And this is the abyss in which Dr. Harnack's teaching would engulf us. And the road which leads to it is the so-called "Higher Criticism." Not so, it will perhaps it will be said, with our English Critics. But the explanation of this is simple. As a nation we are not as logical as the Germans, and most of our English Critics still feel the power of truth which every free and fearless thinker recognises to be inconsistent with the principles and conclusions of the pseudo-Criticism.

## CHAPTER VI

**A**SSUMING that vivisection is lawful when some definite and useful purpose can be attained by it, I propose to put a German professor on the table. Some two years ago Professor Friedrich Delitzsch of the University of Berlin delivered a lecture in the presence of the German Emperor upon the relation between the Bible and recent archæological discoveries. And a second lecture followed on the same subject and under the same auspices. These lectures afterwards appeared in book form with the captivating title of "Babel and Bible"; and an English translation now lies before me, "edited, with an Introduction, by C. H. W. Johns, M. A.," of Queen's College, Cambridge.

This introduction recites that in reading these lectures all Bible students "felt themselves on very familiar ground." "No doubt," the writer remarks, "some felt a little disappointed at so conservative a treatment." "It came therefore as a shock of surprise to find that rejoinders were being issued." And referring to these rejoinders by Christian scholars, Mr. Johns writes, "In an age when almost any argument is enough to base a popular cause upon, when men let themselves be led captive by the most specious nonsense, we are used to the publication of things as meaningless as the scrawlings of planchette. But even

these meet with so much acceptance that they become a perilous influence on ill-regulated minds.”<sup>1</sup>

I crave special attention to these words. They are altogether typical of the weapons by which every day, and on every side, humble Christians are being brow-beaten into unbelief by the advocates of this modern craze of the pseudo-Criticism. In our own country at least such weapons are not tolerated in other spheres of controversy. Even in the rough struggle of politics it is only the baser sort of men who have recourse to them. And in a sphere in which feeling is so sensitive and so sacred no generous mind will stoop to use them. But we are told at every turn that all intelligence, all scholarship, and all culture are on the side of this new apostasy. The same taunt was as freely urged by the champions of the old Arian heresy, of which this modern heresy is but a veiled revival.

*“Ill-regulated minds”*: *“The most specious nonsense”*: *“As meaningless as the scrawlings of planchette.”* Such weapons are not to my taste. But if I stoop to wrest them from those whose choice they are, I will use them unsparingly. Spiritual truth is absolutely Divine, and must be spiritually discerned. But error and nonsense are altogether human, and can be refuted on that basis. If men choose to treat the Bible

<sup>1</sup> A most outspoken “rejoinder” to Delitzsch was a sermon preached in the Cambridge University pulpit on 8th Nov., 1903. This indignant repudiation of the methods and conclusions of the book was by the “ill-regulated mind” of the Rev. A. F. Kirkpatrick, D. D., Master of Selwyn College, and one of the Professors of Divinity in the University.—*Cambridge Review*, 12 Nov., 1903.

as a purely human book, we can meet them on their own ground. But when their lucubrations are shown to be mere senseless scrawlings and specious nonsense, let us have no whining if we brand them as they deserve.

With these prefatory words I open "Babel and Bible." The first thirty-nine pages of the book are mainly a record of some of the recent archæological discoveries which have amazed and delighted faint-hearted Christians by the confirmation they afford of the authenticity of Scripture: confirmation of a kind that in other ages was never dreamed of by millions who lived and died in the faith of it. But it is the pages that follow which concern us here, for in these we have the lecturer's inferences and comments.

Here is the first: "When, therefore, the twelve tribes of Israel invaded Canaan, they came to a land which was a domain completely pervaded by Babylonian culture."<sup>1</sup>

Yes, and the fact has a significance which neither the German professor nor his English editor seems to understand. Babylon was so essentially the seat and impersonation of the religious apostasy of the old world, that in the Apocalypse the name is used in connection with the religious apostasy of the Christian dispensation. The Reformation was God's method of setting up a testimony against Rome: the call of Abraham, the Egyptian bondage, the Exodus, and the Eisode were His methods of preparing a people who should be His witnesses against the apostasy of Babylon.

<sup>1</sup>p. 39.

Hence the sternness with which every influence that tended toward Babylon was suppressed or barred. But in this age of shallow indifference people who call themselves Protestants disparage the Reformers because of their uncompromising hostility to Rome; and people who call themselves Christians blaspheme the God of the Bible because of His stern severity toward Babylon.

But let us come to the details of this new enlightenment. "Just," we are told—

"Just as the sacrificial and priestly system of the Old Testament is profoundly influenced by the Babylonian, so it is significant that Israelite tradition itself no longer affords any certain information respecting the origin of the Sabbath (*cf.* Exod. xx. 11 with Deut. v. 15).

"But since the Babylonians also had a Sabbath . . . it is scarcely possible for us to doubt that we owe the blessings decreed in the Sabbath or Sunday day of rest in the last resort to that ancient and civilised race on the Euphrates and Tigris."<sup>1</sup>

Now my purpose here is not to lay down the law, but to treat my readers as a jury, whose function it shall be to decide the issues I submit to them. I pause therefore here to raise the question, What must be the mental condition, the reasoning capacity, of a man who could write the words I have just quoted, or who could, as an editor, adopt them?

The preliminary inquiry—the supposed conflict between Exod. xx. and Deut. v.—may be left to the judgment of any intelligent Christian. The re-pro-mulgation of the Sabbath law at Sinai—for that it was

<sup>1</sup> pp. 40, 41.



a re-promulgation the words of the Decalogue expressly recognise—pointed back to the Creation. But that law had been forgotten and lost while Israel was “a slave in the land of Egypt.” Hence Moses’ added words at its second re-promulgation at the Jordan: “Therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.” This, however, is a minor point.

One of the many difficulties and embarrassments of secret service work arises from the necessity of trusting one’s agents. If I want an informant to follow up a clue, I must place the thread in his hand. If I want him to work on the facts already in my possession, it may be necessary to give him those facts. I thus put it in his power to sell my information to the newspapers, or to disclose it to his co-conspirators. And yet I cannot certainly charge him with being false to me; for I have given him *facts*, and facts may be known to others as well as to myself. But I can easily test him. Let me send him out with a plausibly invented story; and if one word of it appears in the newspapers, or comes back to me through other informants, I know he has betrayed my confidence.

This parable surely needs no commentary. If the Sabbath were a human institution, then the argument would be plausible that, as Babylon had a Sabbath day, and Babylon was an older nation than Israel, the day of rest was borrowed from “that ancient race on the Euphrates.” Plausible, I admit, but nothing more. But when these men go on to lay this down as a fact which “*it is scarcely possible for us to doubt,*” we can only suppose that their brain power of doubting

is already exhausted by the effort of doubting everything which has been most surely believed among Christians of every name in every age. If, on the other hand, the Sabbath is a Divine institution—if, as we know, the seven-day cycle is stamped upon our very physical frame—then the whole argument is absolutely puerile.

In a measure also the foregoing parable applies to the record of the Flood. Even if the Biblical narrative were a mere legend, the student of evidence would decide, not that Genesis was based on the Babylon version of it, but that both were derived from a common source. For the differences which mark them can scarcely be explained on any other ground. But this Deluge controversy is worn threadbare, and I pass on to the Creation.<sup>1</sup>

I could wish that space permitted of my giving in full Professor Delitzsch's summary of "the creation-epic" of Babylon, recounting the struggle between Marduk, "the god of light," and the evil dragon, Tiâmat. But the following extract must suffice:—

"Straight he drives to meet the dragon and her army, and utters the call to single combat. Then Tiâmat uttered wild and piercing cries until the ground quaked asunder from the bottom. She opened her jaws to their utmost, but before she could close her lips the god Marduk bade the evil wind enter within her; then seizing the javelin, he cut her heart in pieces, cast down her body and stood upon it whilst her

<sup>1</sup> The Sabbath is dealt with on pp. 40 and 41 (see also pp. 181 and 190); the Flood on pp. 42-46; and the Creation on pp. 47-52. Why the Flood should come before the Creation, I do not know.

myrmidons were placed in durance vile. Then Marduk clave Tiāmat clean asunder like a fish: out of the one half he formed heaven, out of the other earth, at the same time divid- ing the upper waters from the lower by means of the firma- ment."

We are asked to believe that this is the origin of the simple and sublime record of Genesis! The ques- tion which once again I submit to the thoughtful reader is, not as to the truth or heresy of such a theory, but as to the intellectual condition, the reasoning capacity, of men who propound it or who father it. Where is the "specious nonsense" now?

We next come to the story of the Fall, and here again I submit the same issue to the jury. "May we point to an old Babylonian cylinder seal?" the lec- turer asks. And a fac-simile of the seal is set out upon the page. "Here, in the middle," he proceeds, "is the tree hanging with fruit; on the right the man, to be recognised by the horns, the symbol of strength, on the left the woman; both reaching out their hands to the fruit, and behind the woman the serpent. Should there not be a connection between this old Babylonian representation and the Biblical story of the Fall?"<sup>1</sup>

"A connection"? Certainly. No one would dis- pute it. But the suggestion that this discredits "the Biblical story of the Fall" is worthy of a lunatic asylum. And yet this is clearly the innuendo of the passage.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> To reproduce the illustration is unfortunately impracti- cable. It reminds one of a baby's first attempt at art. The tree in the middle is like a dilapidated hat-stand. On either

We next learn that the heaven and the hell of the Bible are but a perversion of "the simple Babylonian idea of the clear water which is enjoyed in Sheol by those who are perfectly pious."<sup>1</sup> And as for angels, "the idea that the Deity employs messengers is essentially Babylonian; and the conception of cherubim and seraphim, and of guardian angels attending upon man, is also to be traced back to Babylonia. A Babylonian ruler required an army of messengers to carry his commands into every land; so, too, the gods must have a legion of messengers or angels always ready to do their service."<sup>2</sup>

Again I ask, What can be the mental condition of people who think the Bible is discredited by such "specious nonsense" as this? Indeed the reader may decide whether, here at least, the qualifying adjective may not be discarded.

Yet another specimen. "The Yahwè faith" was "burdened . . . with a heathen sacrificial cultus."<sup>3</sup> Thus it is that this writer brands the sacrifices which, the New Testament expressly declares, were Divine types of Calvary.

side is a petticoated figure in a sitting posture, with an air space between it and a square box. As Professor Delitzsch tells us, we know that one is a man because he has horns; he omits to mention that we know the other is a woman because she has a hat. Behind her is a serpent pirouetting on the tip of its tail. It is most interesting as showing how traditions of the Fall have survived outside the sphere of revelation. But for Professor Delitzsch's purpose it is grotesquely puerile. That I have not misrepresented his purpose is clear from an appendix note on p. 114; *qui s'excuse s'accuse*.

<sup>1</sup> p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> p. 76.

Here I would propose a question. Did any sane man, savage or civilised, ever evolve from his own brain the thought that if he offended another the right way to appease him would be to make a mess opposite his door by slaughtering a beast there? And the man who could imagine that his god would be propitiated by such a performance must suppose his god to be more of a lunatic than himself. There is only one explanation possible of the "heathen sacrificial cultus," and that is the tradition of a primeval revelation.

But, we are told, the 19th verse of the 4th chapter of Deuteronomy "at one blow annihilates the phantom of an 'original revelation,'" and at the same time expresses "in the plainest words" that all nations, Israel alone excepted, are "given up by Yahwè himself to godlessness and idolatry."<sup>1</sup>

Here are materials for an interesting *de lunatico* inquiry. Will my reader study for himself this verse—Deut. iv. 19—and see if he can find in it the meaning thus extracted from it.

There is plenty in these pages about the savage cruelty of "Yahwè," and much is made of the extermination of the "innocent" Canaanites.<sup>2</sup> The lecturer's archæological researches might have taught him that those nations were all (as the Bible tells us) "greater and mightier" than Israel. How was it,

<sup>1</sup> pp. 206 and 207; cf. p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> E. g., "The more deeply I immerse myself in the spirit of the prophetic literature of the Old Testament the greater becomes my mistrust of Yahwè, who butchers the people with the sword of his insatiable anger."

then, that they went down before Israel as ripe corn falls before the sickle?

They had their "walled cities" and "their chariots of iron"—the equivalent of modern artillery. And yet one and all they fell before this nomad Arab tribe, not long rescued from slavery; a tribe that had neither horse nor chariot, nor a "walled city," and whose "military base" was only an open camp, filled with women and children, and camp-followers and cattle. He who scouts the whole story may be a philosopher; but he who accepts the facts and yet rejects the Scriptural explanation of them must be a—well, he is not a philosopher!

And here two passages of Holy Scripture might have checked the lecturer's blasphemies. The one tells how, centuries before these nations were given over to destruction by a long-suffering and merciful God, they had become so steeped in nameless vice, that in one of their cities not even ten men could be found who were free from it.<sup>1</sup> And the other is the awful warning which fell from the lips of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that a fate more terrible than that of Sodom awaits the rejecters of His teaching.

The God who gave up the nations of Canaan to the sword is He who in one hour destroyed the Cities of

<sup>1</sup> The subject is an unsavoury one, and I would deal with it by referring to Mr. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," pp. 112, 113. Those nations, he writes, "had reached that latest stage of sensual iniquity, which respects neither God nor Nature." Their "bestial indulgencies had become recognised, normal, nay more, even religious and obligatory." But I refer to the whole passage.

the Plain by fire. And with that God and that judgment the Saviour in His ministry of grace identified Himself.<sup>1</sup> But men who hold the Bible in such contempt cannot be expected to read it carefully.

There is another of their errors which the reverent student of Scripture would avoid. I wonder whether Macaulay's *New Zealander*, when he comes to write our story, will take our Criminal Code as reflecting the principles by which Christians to-day are guided in their daily life. Yet a blunder as gross marks the criticisms of these pundits. They confound the law of the theocracy with teaching by which the people of God were to direct their lives.

And there is yet another blunder which marks these pages, a blunder shared by very many who have no sympathy with heresy. People seem to think that while grace is Divine, law is altogether human. But "there is no power but of God," and the criminal magistrate is as definitely a "minister of God"<sup>2</sup> as is the preacher of the Gospel. And the very element which leads ignorance to brand the "Mosaic Code" as barbarous is precisely the element the want of which makes English law so cruel in its operation. The "anarchist"—that is, the man who committed a "presumptuous" (or, as R. V. has it, a *high-handed*) offence, an offence in respect of which no plea of provocation or temptation could be urged—received a pitiless judgment; but for others, even the homicide not excepted, there was mercy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 15; xi. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiii.

<sup>3</sup> Num. xv. 30-36; xxxv. 11. The author deals with this question in his "Christianised Rationalism," pp. 56-58; and

Professor Delitzsch's use of the Hammurabi Code is so characteristic of the ways of the pseudo-Critics, that it claims a passing notice. The Amraphel of Genesis xiv. they formerly dismissed as a myth, and the "Mosaic Books," they declared, could not have been written so early as in the Mosaic age. But now Amraphel stands out as one of the great figures of the old world, and his code has rightly excited admiration. But instead of repenting of their past mistakes and blunders, the Critics now declare that the Mosaic Code was merely an adaptation of this Hammurabi Code of four centuries earlier.

When judged by details of the kind to which the student of evidence would look in testing such a question, the two codes are entirely dissimilar. But this is not all. If the "Mosaic Code" were purely human and really the work of Moses, the theory would be reasonable that it was borrowed from Babylon; but, according to the Critics, this code was framed a thousand years after Hammurabi had been forgotten. Their one theory thus blows their other theory into the air.

My scheme, however, is not to review or answer this evil book, but merely to enable my readers to estimate aright its character. And this for the purpose I have indicated, namely, to illustrate the effects of the pseudo-Criticism upon minds of a certain kind. In "What is Christianity?" we see how a scholar of

from another point of view in his articles on Crime in the *Nineteenth Century*, 1901-1904. It is the want of this distinction which makes our English law so cruel to the weak, so inefficient in the case of the wicked.



the highest rank, a grave and reverent theologian, and a master of the rare art of reasoning, is thus, by the inexorable logic of a false system, brought down to the level of mere Rationalism. In "Babel and Bible" we see how a man of a different type is led with levity worthy of a precocious schoolboy to run amuck through all that is most sacred in the Christian revelation. Many a page might be filled with extracts to point the moral. But two more quotations must suffice.

The first of these I cannot bring myself to criticise. I give the shameful words without note or comment:—

"'O Marduk!'—runs a petition in a prayer to the city-deity of Babel—'O Marduk! to thee belongs the spittle of life!' Who can fail in such a connection to recall New Testament accounts such as that which narrates that Jesus took the deaf and dumb man aside, put his finger unto his ears, spat, and with the spittle touched his tongue, and said, 'Ephphatha,' 'Be thou opened!'"<sup>1</sup>

My last quotation is the following:—

"With the giving of the Law from Sinai, the conclusion of a so-called covenant by Yahwè with Israel, it is in no respect different. In spite of this sacrosanct bond the purely human origin and character of the Israelitish Law is sufficiently obvious."<sup>2</sup>

If "sufficiently obvious," how strange it is that it was reserved for this "Daniel come to judgment" to discover it. What possible claim to respect or consideration have men who treat in this jaunty way the

<sup>1</sup> p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 187, 188.

deliberate convictions of others, so many of whom hold the highest rank in the hierarchy of learning and of genius? For page after page might be filled with the names of contemporary thinkers and scholars of world-wide fame in every branch of human knowledge who believe that the Sinai covenant was Divine.

The main "argument" of the Epistle to the Hebrews is based upon the contrast between this Divine covenant with Israel, and the new and better covenant of which the Christian revelation speaks. Here we stand upon holy ground. But there is an inner shrine; and as we pass within the veil into the presence of our Divine Lord, we hear from His lips those most sacred of sacred words. "This is the NEW covenant in My blood which is shed for you."

The greatest of the Apostles was once "a blasphemer," but he obtained mercy because he sinned in unbelief and ignorance. And all who know the boundless grace which the new covenant betokens may surely cherish the hope that, in the infinite mercy of God, the authors of such books as these may receive a fool's pardon at the last.

## CHAPTER VII

**S**TAID and pious folk are apt to forget their piety, and sometimes even their morals, when, in visiting some foreign country, they no longer feel the restraining influences which regulate their life at home. And a like phenomenon is not unknown in a wholly different sphere. The air of the United States is in no way incompatible with Christian truth—witness the noble stand for the Bible maintained by some of the greatest American scholars. But it seems to have a disturbing effect upon the minds of visitors.

In 1899 Dr. George Adam Smith, Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in the Glasgow Theological College of the Free Church of Scotland, crossed the Atlantic to deliver the “Yale Lectures” of that year. His lectures were afterwards published under the title “Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament”; and men of no narrowness of mind or creed were startled to find in this volume some of the worst heresies and follies of the pseudo-Criticism respecting the Hebrew Scriptures.

The waning Puritanism of the Free Church was supposed to have received a new stimulus by the recent accession of the United Presbyterian body. As was but natural, therefore, Professor Smith was put upon his defence. A “memorial” emanating from “a meeting of ministers and elders” brought the

matter formally to the notice of the "College Committee"; and the Committee called upon the Professor for his *apologia*, with a view to referring the whole question to the Supreme Court of the United Free Church.

When, therefore, the General Assembly met in Edinburgh in 1902 Professor Smith's case came up for decision; and the decision arrived at was a refusal, on technical grounds, to take any action in the matter.

In the old hanging days a judge allowed a felon to escape if a flaw was found in the indictment. And if the question here had been that of handing over a heretic to the secular arm, or even excommunicating him, the decision of the Assembly might obtain general approval. But that decision was by no means of a purely negative character. It had far-reaching practical effects of extreme gravity. Notwithstanding a repudiation of Professor Smith's heresies, it practically condoned these heresies; and, in continuing him in his Chair, it operated as a public avowal that he was deemed to be a suitable teacher of candidates for ordination in the United Free Church of Scotland, and therefore, of course, that such teaching is legitimate from the pulpits of that Church.

It is with a definite object that I emphasise this. For there are special reasons why I wish to say as little as possible about Professor Smith's book.<sup>1</sup> And just as the acceptance of a bill ousts all questions about the drawer of it, so the decision of the Assembly

<sup>1</sup> I learn from friends of Dr. Smith that owing to ill-health he has been compelled to leave home for the East, and that he will be absent for some time.

covers the Professor, and throws his book into the shade. Moreover, the Assembly's decision was not taken upon the book itself, but upon the charges laid in the "memorial," the author's defence, and the Committee's report on the case.

In "Babel and Bible" we have the jaunty profanity of a sceptic with a hobby. Dr. Smith's book is characterised throughout by the reverence and piety of a man whose personal influence is due to the sincerity of his faith and to his zeal in practical Christian work. And the object of his book is not at all, as seems to be generally supposed, to establish "the results of the latest and best scholarship," or, in other words, the decrees and dicta of the pseudo-Critics. On the contrary, he assumes those results. "Modern criticism," he declares, "has won its war against the traditional theories. It only remains to fix the amount of the indemnity."<sup>1</sup>

Claptrap of this kind is not worthy of the author. And yet it indicates the character of his book. For it is not so much a scholarly treatise as a popular appeal. It is addressed to "preachers" rather than to students;<sup>2</sup> and, so far as I know, it is the only book of its kind which breathes the Christian spirit. "Truth is one." But it is not so in Professor Smith's theology. For with him the wine of doctrine is kept, as it were,

<sup>1</sup> p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> p. 209. Here and there it betokens carelessness, as for example, where he refers (pp. 7, 8) to Dr. Ryle's "Canon of the Old Testament" as "*the* text-book on the subject," and yet makes disparaging statements about the Canon, which are opposed both to the letter and the spirit of that work.

in bottles; so that the good is untainted by the bad. Though rare with Protestants, this is not uncommon with Roman Catholics.

His "task" he defines to be "to inquire, first, whether this criticism has been true to the liberty which the New Testament sanctions"; and second, whether it "has conserved or has imperilled that permanent religious value of the Old Testament which Christ and His Apostles so fully enforced."<sup>1</sup> It is important to keep this in view.

At the very outset I must express my sympathy with the author in his revolt against "traditional beliefs." Every Protestant should be ready to bring all such beliefs to the test of Scripture. If our own country has escaped the revolutionary influences which have at times destroyed or threatened public order in less favoured lands, it is because we have so long enjoyed the safety-valve of free thought and free discussion. And those of us who have learned to distinguish between Divine truth and the decrees and creeds of Churches and theologies, are not likely to be submerged by this wave of pseudo-Criticism. It only makes us take a firmer hold of "the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture."

But Professor Smith's revolt against an iron-bound creed has been of the nature of a revolution. Indeed he uses the word "revolutionary" as describing his new views. Having got hold, for example, of the great principle that Divine revelation is progressive—which is as true of the New Testament as of the Old<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> On this subject I would refer to Canon Bernard's "Prog-

—he at once runs riot with it. It leads him to dismiss the early chapters of Genesis as “myth and legend,” though it would suggest to a more sober judgment that these “documents” are the authentic records of earlier revelations, and that a task akin to that of Nehemiah in a later age was then discharged by Moses.

It leads him also to adopt many of what may fitly be described as the stock *bêtises* of the pseudo-Criticism. A flagrant example of this appears even in his preface. In the beginning, he tells us, “God revealed Himself as a tribal deity—*the only conception of the Divine nature of which at the time the Semitic mind was capable.*”<sup>1</sup>

Within the present generation we ourselves have witnessed how American Indians, African savages, and even debased cannibals of the New Hebrides have been brought to the knowledge of the Christian’s God, and yet we are told that men like Abraham were incapable under Divine teaching of a higher conception of God than that of “a tribal deity”—Abraham, of whom the Master said that he rejoiced to see *His* day, “and he saw it and was glad.” The exigencies of a false system can alone account for so devout and sensible a man’s identifying himself with such profane folly as this.<sup>2</sup>

ress of Doctrine in the New Testament,” being the Bampton Lectures for 1864.

<sup>1</sup>p. ix. The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup>Underlying it there lurks the fallacy of supposing that God has a name in the sense in which men have names. The *Dieu* of the French Christian is the same God whom the

“Log-rolling” prevails among the pseudo-Critics. Some one of them starts a theory of this kind, and the others at once take it up. And the folly of it all becomes positively grotesque when we remember that, according to their own hypothesis, the books from which they derive these theories about the Patriarchs and their religion were all forgeries of the days of the Kingdom or of the Exile!

This last remark applies with full force to the Critics’ use of Exodus vi. 3: “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty, but as to My name Jehovah I was not known to them.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the ordinary reader will find in these words a complete refutation of the “tribal deity” theory (unless “God Almighty” be a tribal deity), and he will certainly not read it as if it were a newspaper “agony column” announcement that God Almighty was changing His name! Its meaning is simple and obvious. Jehovah was the covenant name, and God was now about to prove to His people by practical deliverance and blessing what it meant to have a covenant God.

The reverence with which Christians regard every part of the Bible often leads them to give a forced meaning or a false prominence to isolated texts. But the Critics are incomparably the worst offenders in

English Christian worships. And the God of the Patriarchs differed from the “Marduk” of Babylon, not because of the name, but because, in contrast with all mere tribal deities, *He* was the true and living God, “the God of glory” (Acts vii. 2), the God who made the heavens and the earth.

<sup>1</sup> R. V. *margin*.



this respect. They disparage the Bible and disregard much of its plainest teaching, and yet they have a stock selection of perverted texts which they revere with the blind devotion of fetish-worshippers.

The passage last quoted is an instance of this; Deuteronomy iv. 19 is another. We have seen the use made of it in "Babel and Bible," and here it is paraded again. Here are the words: "Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven." Upon which Dr. Smith writes: "Even so monotheistic a book as Deuteronomy speaks (iv. 19) of the heathen gods *allotted* or *assigned* to their various peoples by Jehovah Himself—a statement of which the only possible explanation is that the writer has arrived at a stage of belief or conception intermediate between that of the reality of heathen deities and that of their unreality."

"The *only possible* explanation," mark. And yet it may be doubted whether anyone except a Critic with a hobby would deem the suggested explanation "Possible." Possible it might be, perhaps, if the text read "to all *other* peoples." But the plain words are that God distributed the heavenly luminaries to give light to "*all* the peoples [Israel included] under the whole heaven."

Here is another; in David's appeal to Saul he said, "They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go,

serve other gods.”<sup>1</sup> Upon which Professor Smith’s gloss is that the worship of Jehovah “was regarded even by a national leader like David as confined to His people’s territory.”<sup>2</sup> Let the reader judge. Possibly the words will rather suggest to him the indignant answer which Professor Smith himself might have made if the General Assembly had expelled him and told him to go over to the Rationalists.

I might make many additions to this list of misread texts, but the most flagrantly ignorant one of all shall be my last. Some of the principal heresies of the Critics depend on the assumption that the Pentateuch is authentic; and yet when the exigencies of their theories require it, they quote Jeremiah vii. 22 to prove “that Jehovah did *not* give directions to the nation when they were brought out of Egypt concerning sacrifices.”

The Prophet’s words are: “I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices.” But this merely recites a fact which is as plainly recorded on the open page of the book of Exodus as is the Exodus itself. The ritual of the law had nothing to do with Israel’s redemption; it was given to a people already redeemed and brought into covenant relationship with God.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Pamphlet, p. 10. He goes on to quote 1 Sam. xix. 13 as further proving his point. That passage merely indicates the notorious fact that the Israelites were given to idolatry, and the further fact that Michal regarded her “teraphim” as a mere doll. Fancy a devout Roman Catholic using an image of the Virgin Mary for such a purpose!

The spiritual Christian sees a deep significance in this; but the fact is patent to any intelligent reader. Here was the announcement entrusted to Moses at the Exodus: "*If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant . . . ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*"<sup>1</sup> And in the passage already cited Jeremiah was merely quoting this. Here are his words: "I spake not unto your fathers . . . concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, *Obey My voice, and I will be your God and ye shall be My people.*"

But what concerns us here is not so much Professor Smith's book as the official pamphlet on which the Assembly's decision was taken. For the question is not the heresies of an individual, but the apostasy of a Church. That "the receiver is as bad as the thief" is not the view of Scotland Yard. The thief may steal under the pressure of poverty or strong temptation; the receiver acts deliberately, and is therefore very much worse than the thief. Professor Smith's lapse recalls the dictum of Coleridge: "Call no man heretic because his creed is heretical"; but the Assembly's action admits of no palliation or excuse. To reprint the pamphlet here is of course impracticable, but the following extracts will suffice.

The first deals with the opening chapter of Genesis:—

"Whether the ultimate source of the materials employed in Genesis i.-xi. be Babylonian or not there is agreement

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xix. 5, 6.

amongst scholars that they are drawn from early Semitic folk-lore—for the contents of which ‘myth and legend’ are in our language the most proper terms. In such stories early peoples expressed their intellectual conceptions of the creation of the world and of its Divine government.”<sup>1</sup>

“There is agreement amongst scholars.” A more monstrous misstatement was never uttered, for scholarship is not the monopoly of the pseudo-Critics. Let that pass, however, for the General Assembly of the United Free Church accepted it. But has that Church lost the truth which we used to be taught in Sunday School, that the Old Testament is the history, not of man, but of the Abrahamic race; and that its first eleven chapters are not history in any true sense, but the preface to the history—the Divine record of certain facts on which the history is based?<sup>2</sup>

The paragraph from which the foregoing extract is taken, closes as follows:—

“If, as everybody admits, the Spirit of God conveys truth to us through such forms, am I to be blamed for asserting that He conveyed truth to us, in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, through kindred conceptions of Nature and its structure?”<sup>3</sup>

This is simply astounding. These words are prefaced by noticing that “Revelation speaks of the sun

<sup>1</sup> p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> This disposes of Dr. Smith’s argument from the date of the Tower of Babel (book, p. 91; pamphlet, p. 12). Biblical chronology begins with Abraham; and while there is evidently a *mystic* scheme of chronology covering the whole, there is no certainty as to the actual period between Adam and Abraham. (See “Bible and Modern Criticism,” pp. 163, 164.)

<sup>3</sup> p. 12.

moving round the earth," and that "the earth is conceived as founded *upon* the seas," etc., etc. All which is perplexing and distressing to the Critics, though it weighs nothing in the court of common-sense. Here, however, we learn that the Genesis legends have a Divine sanction! But surely if "God conveyed *truth* to us" in and by legends, they must be true, as legends sometimes are. And, moreover, the level-headed man of the world will here be of the same opinion as the spiritual Christian, that if God is responsible for Genesis i.-xi., we may be sure that in those chapters we have, not legends at all, but facts on which the legends were founded.

We now come to the "Patriarchal narratives," and here we read:—

"What I have tried to show with regard to them is this. The documents which contain these stories were written many centuries after the age of the Patriarchs; they reflect much of the religious experience and conception of Israel during the period of the Double Kingdom and even later ages. The discoveries of Egyptian and Mesopotamian archæology provide us with evidence of the possibility (or even credibility) *only* of the main outlines of the Patriarchal narratives, but do not verify any of the detailed events nor furnish a single proof of the personal existence of the Patriarchs themselves. If the memorialists can prove criticism to be wrong in any of its conclusions relevant to this point; if they can cite any archæological evidence for the personal reality of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, nobody will be more glad than myself. My whole prejudice and bias have been in favour of the historical accuracy of the Patriarchal stories. But years of research and study have convinced me, that in the present state of human knowledge such a line of proof is impossible.

"I have, however, admitted in the volume (p. 106) that it

is extremely probable that the stories of the Patriarchs have at the heart of them historical elements.”<sup>1</sup>

And again:—

“The traditions of the life and work of Moses have come down to us in the same documents which contain the Patriarchal narratives—with the addition of course of the book of Deuteronomy—that is to say, in documents written from four to seven centuries after the Mosaic period itself (if we take this to have been the thirteenth century B. C.). The Pentateuchal history of Moses is therefore in need of the same criticism as the Patriarchal narratives.”<sup>2</sup>

Under English law the testimony of informers is always received with caution, and unless it be corroborated in some material respect by independent evidence it is entirely ignored. And the Bible is here treated precisely as an informer's evidence is treated in our courts of justice. The Old Testament has obtained sufficient confirmation from pagan sources to entitle it to a hearing; but yet its testimony must be received with caution and reserve. And if at any point it clashes, or seems to clash, with pagan inscriptions, the Bible, and not the inscriptions, must give way.

Judicial experience and skill are needed to direct a jury what they may accept and what they should refuse. And here too we need a counsellor to guide us. Men of the highest eminence as scholars tell us that the Patriarchs were only lunar myths; but we have the authority of Professor George Adam Smith of the Glasgow College for believing, notwithstanding the

<sup>1</sup> p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> p. 14.

absence of pagan corroboration, that Abraham and Moses really existed!

And it is not the Bible only that is thus disparaged. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is here treated like "a common informer." *His testimony counts for nothing. From the first sentence of this pamphlet to the last, He is absolutely ignored.*

A lawyer has sometimes to advise his client that judgment must go against him unless the evidence of some important witness on the other side can be discredited or explained away. And so it is here. If "the assured results of modern criticism" are to hold their ground, there is one witness who must be got rid of. And that witness is no other than **THE MASTER HIMSELF.**

## CHAPTER VIII

“**S**ETTling the issues” is one of the essential preliminaries to a lawsuit. The object of the “pleadings” is to ascertain with precision the matter in dispute. And anything alleged upon one side and admitted upon the other is taken as proved, and no evidence is needed to establish it.

Now it is neither denied nor even questioned, and therefore it may be accepted as indisputable, that the Lord Jesus Christ regarded the Hebrew Bible as possessing Divine authority. It would unduly strain His words to construe them as vetoing inquiry upon matters which fall within the scope of *true* criticism; such, for example, as whether the book of Genesis was not in part a compilation of earlier documents, or whether the book of Isaiah may not include the prophecies of some other prophet.<sup>1</sup>

In a well-known passage Josephus describes the spirit in which the Hebrew Scriptures were treated by his nation. Here are his words: “Although so great an interval of time has now passed [since they were written], not a soul has ventured either to add, or to

<sup>1</sup> I do not allude to the sixteen “Second Isaiahs” theory, or the cutting up of the book into fragments—all this only illustrates the fact that eminent scholars may be very silly—but whether the later section of Isaiah may not be by a later prophet. As a matter of *evidence*, it is hopelessly untenable. (See “Bible and Modern Criticism,” pp. 45-47.)



remove, or to alter a syllable; and it is the instinct of every Jew, from the day of his birth, to consider those [Scriptures] as the teaching of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to lay down life in their behalf."

It was to men whose minds were saturated with this spirit and these beliefs that our Lord addressed such words as these:—

"The Scripture cannot be broken."<sup>1</sup>

"Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."<sup>2</sup>

The question is often asked, What were "the Scriptures" to which the Lord so often referred? Some books of seeming repute aver that the Jewish Canon was at that time not yet settled, and that it certainly included apocryphal writings which have no Divine sanction. In answer to this question, and in refutation of these false statements, I will again appeal to a writer of high authority with the Critics.

In the "Canon of the Old Testament" the Bishop of Winchester uses these words:—

"The full complement of Scripture had been arrived at a century before the coming of Him who came not to destroy but to fulfil 'the Law and the Prophets.' . . . It was thus divinely ordered that we should be enabled to know the exact limits of those Scriptures upon which has rested the sanction conveyed by the usage and blessing of our Divine Master, and of which He spake, 'these are they which bear witness of Me' (John v. 39). Thus, too, an effectual barrier was raised to protect the Scriptures of the Apostles against the encroach-

<sup>1</sup>John x. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. v. 18.

ments of any unauthorised additions. The use of the LXX. version familiarised the Christian Church with writings that never found a place in the Hebrew Canon; but through the action of the Jewish doctors at the close of the first century A. D., there was never any doubt what the limits of the Hebrew Canon were."

Let it be kept clearly in view, then, that the Scriptures, declared by our Divine Lord to have Divine authority, were identical with those contained in the Old Testament of the Christian's Bible.

For eighteen centuries the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ was held to be decisive by Christians of every name. Indeed the mere refusal to accept His teaching placed anyone outside the pale. But now all this is changed. His testimony to the Divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures is full and clear; but the new theology of the *Kenosis*<sup>1</sup> bids us disregard it. For, we are told, He so completely "emptied Himself" that He held the position of a Jew of His time and shared the prevailing ignorance and error respecting the very Scriptures which it was His mission to fulfil.

This, moreover, is enforced by catch questions, as, for example, whether our Divine Lord could have solved problems in higher mathematics. To some of us such questions seem quite as irrelevant as they are irreverent. As the Bishop of Durham writes:—

"The most cautious, the most worshipping, theology may hold that He consented, in His Humanity, to limitations of

<sup>1</sup> *Kenosis* is a Greek word meaning an emptying. The verb is used in Philippians ii. 7.

His conscious knowledge, and to silence outside those bounds. But here He appears as ignorant with that sort of ignorance which so profoundly impairs the whole value of a teacher—the ignorance of the man who does not know where his knowledge ends, and so makes confident affirmations, and draws confident inferences, where his basis as to facts is unsound.”<sup>1</sup>

In contrast with these weighty words, the following is a statement of the pseudo-Critics' views, taken from their most accredited text-book: “Both Christ and the Apostles or writers of the New Testament held the current Jewish notions respecting the Divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament.”<sup>2</sup> In all their treatises this profanity is either expressed or implied.

I want the intelligent reader to realise what it means. When he opens the Gospels he is no longer to read the words which fell from the lips of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as being the authoritative declaration of Divine truth, but merely the expression of “current Jewish notions.”

If this canon be accepted, no free and fearless thinker will allow its application to be arbitrarily limited. It must apply not merely to His teaching about Judaism, but equally to His teaching about Christianity. If the teaching was unreliable as regards the past, it must be still more worthless as regards the future. And if His words were false when He spoke of earthly things, how can we take them as true when He spoke of heavenly things? The whole foundations of our faith are thus destroyed.

<sup>1</sup> Preface to the author's “Bible and Modern Criticism.”

<sup>2</sup> Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article “Old Testament,” p. 601.

But, it will be said, the Apostles and Evangelists were inspired. Will the objector again refer to the Critics' confession of unfaith. "The Apostles or writers of the New Testament" shared the "current Jewish notions" of their Master. They were not the inspired heralds of His truth, but the dupes of His false teaching.

But the objector possibly may plead that the Critics overstate their case; that the *Kenosis* ended with the Cross, and that after Pentecost the Apostles spoke, and the Evangelists wrote, in the light of inspiration. But this explodes the *Kenosis* theory altogether. First, because their testimony to the Divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures was as explicit as that of the Master Himself. And secondly, because (to waive all other questions) from the beginning of the Lord's public ministry the Spirit was given to Him "without measure."

But more than this, there are three great facts which the Critics here ignore—and, as we have seen, it is their way to ignore anything that does not fit in with their preconceived conclusions. The first is the Temptation, the second is the Transfiguration, and the third is the Resurrection and the ministry of the Forty Days.

In one respect at least "the current Jewish notions" of nineteen centuries ago might shame the ignorance and error of "the Christian religion." If "they called the Master of the House Beelzebub" it was because the Devil of Jewish theology was the Satan of Scripture, and not the monster of old Babylonian paganism. The Satan of the Temptation was the false Messiah,

the *God* of this world—the awful Being who directs, not its crimes, but its *religion*; who “fashions himself as an angel of light”; who comes to us, as Luther says, with an open Bible. How Satan would have triumphed if, when the true Messiah quoted Deuteronomy, he could have shown Him to be the dupe of “current Jewish notions respecting the Divine authority of the Old Testament”! “Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” was the Master’s estimate of the Hebrew Scriptures. “It is written” was with Him an end of controversy on every point.<sup>1</sup>

“When we were with Him in the Holy Mount,” the inspired Apostle writes, “we were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory.” Here at least there could be no question of the *Kenosis*. For as Moses and Elias “talked with Him” of the Scriptures He had come to fulfil, “the law and the prophets” were in very touch with Him. And “from the excellent glory there came such a voice to Him, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” And the words were added, “HEAR YE HIM.”<sup>2</sup>

Hear ye *whom*? An ignorant Jew, the dupe of “current Jewish notions about the Divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament”—a teacher whose apprehension of the Scriptures was less intelligent than that of present-day professors in our theological colleges—than that of any of the lads who have the inestimable benefit of their teaching!

But this is not all. The same Gospels which record

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. i. 16-18; Matt. xvii. 1-5; Luke ix. 28-35.

the Ministry of the Humiliation contain also the record of words uttered by our Divine Lord after the resurrection, when He spoke in all the fulness of Divine knowledge. And in those words He adopted and confirmed all His previous teaching about the Hebrew Scriptures.

Here are some of them:—

— “ ‘ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? ’ And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.”<sup>1</sup>

And again:—

“ ‘ These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.’ Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, ‘ Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

What answer, what explanation, do the Critics offer us here? *Absolutely none*. With astounding profanity and folly they declare that the teaching of the Humiliation was marked by ignorance and error. And the teaching of the Resurrection they ignore altogether.

“ Then opened He their mind that they might understand the scriptures.” Upon the truth of that statement, and upon the reality of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing to their remembrance all His

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 25-27.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiv. 44-46.

teaching, depends the value of the New Testament and of the whole Christian revelation.

If acquaintance with the text of Holy Scripture carried with it an intelligent apprehension of its meaning, the Jewish leaders who crucified the Lord would stand incomparably above the ablest of the modern Critics. There was not one of them who could not have corrected a slip in the public reading of the sacred books. But because they knew not "the voices of the prophets"—or, in other words, their true meaning—"they fulfilled them in condemning Him."<sup>1</sup>

In the very nature of things error is absurd. And the absurdity of the figment that the Lord's estimate of the Scriptures was derived from His contemporaries is apparent from the fact that none of His contemporaries understood the Scriptures as He interpreted them. Not even His own disciples "knew the voices of the prophets"; therefore it was that the Cross was the death-blow to all their hopes. Hence the words, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." But now "He opened their understanding." And all their after testimony, whether in preaching or in the inspired Scriptures of the New Testament, was the outcome of that enlightenment.

"He opened their mind that they might understand the scriptures." Not so, the Critics tell us; He left them still deceived by His erroneous teaching—the dupes of "current Jewish notions about their inspiration and authority." His estimate of the Hebrew

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii. 27.

Scriptures was a false one; and its falseness, the Critics aver, is of such a kind that it is both dishonouring to God and mischievous in its evil influence upon men.

In the days of His humiliation, so ignorant and deceived was He about the very Scriptures which it was His mission to fulfil, that any one of us can now revise and correct His teaching. And though after the resurrection He had full knowledge of the truth, yet, from motives of policy, He commissioned His Apostles to promulgate the error, thus leaving Church and world to be deluded by the fraud until, after eighteen centuries, German Rationalists discovered and exposed it!

This is the issue raised by the pseudo-Criticism. Let no one try to evade it by quibbling about "verbal inspiration" or the like. We have got far beyond all questions of that kind now. What concerns us here is not the method of the inspiration, nor even the character of the revelation it has given us; but whether we have a Divine teacher. It is not the Bible that is at stake, but the Christ of the Bible. If "criticism has won its war," the "indemnity" must include the unreserved acknowledgment that the Christian faith is mere superstition.

If we hold the Church of Rome to be outside the pale, it is not because its creeds are tainted by error—for no intelligent Protestant pretends that his own Church is perfect in this respect—but because the distinctive errors of Rome disparage and dishonour the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Therefore it is that they are rightly held to be vital.

But let us be honest and fair in this matter. How



can we brand the Church of Rome as an apostasy so long as we acknowledge any Church which publicly endorses this *Kenosis* blasphemy, or allows it to be taught in its colleges or preached from its pulpits.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And this is the issue which in 1902, by a majority vote, was decided by the successors of the men who, in 1843, under the leadership of Chalmers, seceded from the Church of Scotland because they believed that personal loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ demanded a sacrifice so tremendous. Through personal regard for a popular colleague they have now done a dishonour to the Lord so terrible that, in comparison with it, the "disruption" controversy sinks into insignificance. And I write as one who before even he left the nursery felt a thrill of enthusiasm as he heard the record of that struggle. Those noble men, like the old Patriarchs, went out not knowing whither they went. But their degenerate successors, enervated and corrupted by prosperity, seem to have inherited neither their heroism nor their faith.

The pseudo-Criticism has thus "won its war" in the United Free Church of Scotland. But when the laity awake to understand the issue, the majority who voted for the heresy may yet find it was a Pyrrhic victory.

Were not the Lord's words in Matthew x. 32-38 spoken for such a time as this? Let every true-hearted Christian ponder them, and *act on them* by giving encouragement and support to clergymen and ministers who "think upon His Name," while sternly shutting his purse-strings against every man who takes sides against the Master in this controversy.

## CHAPTER IX

**A**T the time when Mr. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture" appeared, he used language which seemed to imply that the Old Testament controversy was no exception to the general rule that we ought to keep an open mind on every question. I wrote to ask him if such was his meaning, as it seemed inconsistent with his book. And the following is an extract from his reply:—

"I do not recommend an open mind on the Old Testament, otherwise than as on all questions we ought according to our opportunities and the circumstances of the case to have an open mind."<sup>1</sup>

In my letter to Mr. Gladstone I urged that even in human affairs there were some questions about which no man worthy of respect would keep an open mind.

<sup>1</sup> This characteristic letter seems worth preserving, apart from the special question at issue. It reminds me of an Irish story. A peasant refused to vote for his priest's candidate at an election. "I don't say I'll do it," said the priest, "and I don't say I won't, but take care I don't turn you into a rat when you're crossing your door going home." The man had a bad time with his wife on the road: "What was to become of her and the farm if he was turned into a rat?" But "*he* wasn't afraid: not all the priests in Ireland could turn him into a rat." This lasted till he got home, when he stopped dead and whispered to his wife, "Sure you might just slip in front of me, Biddy darlint, and tie up the dog!"

What a scoundrel a man would be, for example, who treated in this way the question of his wife's honour! Inquiry may be needed; and if facts confront him he must act on them. But he makes no delay in deciding the matter one way or other; and if he finds the accusation to be false, he clings to her with deepened confidence.

And to the Christian the honour of his Lord is as dear as the honour of his wife. We accept the Hebrew Scriptures, not by grace of the Critics, but in virtue of the *imprimatur* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let this fact be kept steadily in view, unembarrassed by either sophistry or clamour.

That *imprimatur* is no bar, I again repeat, to the most free and searching inquiry and criticism, provided it be intelligent, and honest, and reverent. For "the Mosaic Books," in their outward form, have survived the vicissitudes of five-and-thirty centuries, and they may have suffered at the hands of copyists, and possibly, too, of pious editors. But to raise the issue whether they are God-breathed Scriptures is to bring into question the authority of Christ. "If ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me, for he wrote of Me." By the Master's acceptance of them, all questions about their origin and character are set at rest.

When theologians quarrel over questions of another kind, such, for example, as whether certain Divine prophecies contained in the book of Isaiah were uttered by that prophet or by some other, "A plague on both your houses" describes the attitude of ordinary men of the world. But no honest-minded man will dismiss the present issue in this way. For the question

involved is whether writings which our Divine Lord revered as God-breathed, to be acted on and fulfilled in His life and ministry and death, are not in fact forgeries and frauds.

The book of Leviticus opens thus: "And the Lord called unto Moses and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation." And as we open the book of Numbers we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt." And throughout these two books this formula is repeated more than a hundred times; and the occurrences of "the great and terrible name" of Jehovah are nearer a thousand than a hundred—a name held in such supreme reverence by the Jews that they never utter it, even in reading the Scriptures.

But according to "the critical hypothesis" these books are a mere romance. There never was a "tabernacle of the congregation"; and all the words thus put into the mouth of Jehovah are the invention of priests.

The characteristic honesty of the Anglo-Saxon mind shows itself in antipathy to priestcraft. But in fairness we must admit that the evil records of priestcraft contain nothing quite so bad as this. If the Critics' theory is right, there is a thorough wantonness about the profanity of the "Mosaic Books." Some of the chapters indeed might compare in this respect with the utterances of that sort of blasphemer who cannot put two sentences together without dragging in the Sacred Name,

And He whom Christians own as their Divine Lord and Saviour was deceived and duped by this fraud! And it is owing to His baneful teaching that these books are still read in every Christian Church and every Christian home!

I make no apology for again recurring to this, for it cannot be repeated too often or kept too prominently in view. There was no reserve in the Lord's claim to Divine authority for all His teaching. "The Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak."<sup>1</sup> "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself";<sup>2</sup> "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *My words shall not pass away.*"<sup>3</sup> These are but specimens of His frequent utterances to the same effect. But if the Critics are right, all this was bombast, worthy of a new "Elijah" from Chicago. They tell us that He was duped by error so transparent that any one of us who has honesty and brains can detect it; and that when afterwards He came to discover it was error He adhered to it on grounds of policy.

Carefully veiled or entirely ignored by some of the Critics, this is essential to their scheme, and without it their whole position is untenable.

If immorality can induce its intended victims to listen to its vile overtures, its triumph is almost assured. And the pseudo-Criticism has practically "won its war" when Christians are betrayed into a discussion of this blasphemy. My purpose is not to discuss it, but to denounce it. These pages are not written to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ has not

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 49.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxi. 33.

misled and deceived His people by His teaching about the Hebrew Scriptures: their aim is to impress on men that this is the real issue in this controversy.

Surely the time must come when men of intelligence and common-sense will awake from this nightmare, and, coming out into the open light of truth and reason, will boldly take sides and choose between Christianity and Rationalism. For the one position is as impregnable as the other. More than this, while they who own the authority of the Bible are consistent and logical in their faith, they who take refuge in the authority of the Church are consistent and logical in their superstition. But the man who has neither a Divinely accredited Bible nor a Divinely accredited Church, and yet believes in Christianity, is intellectually contemptible. The great elephant of his transcendental creed has not even a great tortoise to rest upon!

A clear and fearless thinker like Dr. Harnack takes his stand firmly on the bedrock of Rationalism. And the Christian rests with confidence upon the sure Word of his Divine Lord. But (to parody the poet's words) this sort of man has too much "scholarship" for the one side, and too much Christianity for the other, and so he helplessly "hangs between."

There are many who, by some evil instinct, delight in every attack upon the Bible, just as there are some who have a ready ear for what tends to a wife's discredit. For such we have nothing but contempt. But I appeal to the mass of men, who reverence the Scriptures, and Him of whom the Scriptures speak, not to allow themselves to be coerced or cajoled into accept-

ing the decrees of the pseudo-Criticism by the blatant boast that all intelligence and all scholarship are upon its side.<sup>1</sup>

By a certain social coterie the term "Society" is limited to those who are within its ranks; and with the pseudo-Critics the test of scholarship is acceptance of their position. But even if the boast were as well founded as it is false, it would weigh nothing with the Christian, for he would remember the Master's words, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."<sup>2</sup>

Nineteen centuries have passed since Christ was born in Bethlehem, and yet His name is still unknown to half the population of the world. In comparatively recent years the Church has been aroused to its responsibilities in this respect; and, as the result, the Gospel has achieved successes unparalleled since Apostolic days. But it is not "the Christian religion" of the Critics which has won these triumphs. Faith in the Bible as the Word of God has forced men out; and God, whose Word it is, has placed His seal upon their

<sup>1</sup> As I write my eye falls on the *Times* obituary notice of the late Provost of Trinity College, Dublin (23d January, 1904). It justly says that "It is given to few men to attain to the first rank in two distinct provinces," but Dr. Salmon's world-wide fame as a mathematician was equalled by his fame as a theologian. He was deemed "the most learned of Irish theologians since Ussher's time." In view of the attitude maintained by such men, the sceptic's claim to have all the scholarship is absolutely intolerable.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xi. 25.

testimony. But this sceptical crusade against the Bible must tend to kill all enthusiasm in missionary work.

And more than this, in countries like China and India, where missionaries come face to face with educated men who are in touch with the religious thought of Christendom, their efforts are embarrassed, if not paralysed, by this evil influence. A Bible permeated by romance and superstition and error may satisfy the pseudo-Critics, but it is rejected with scorn by those who revere the sacred books of the East.

The following extracts from an article which lately appeared in a Mahometan Review will show how this leaven is working in India. After quoting some of the standard works of the pseudo-Critics, the writer proceeds:—

“ Thus has the Bible been swept away as a straw before the mighty current of modern criticism, and such was the fate it deserved. It is not the unmixed Word of God, it is not unerring. . . . But if the Bible is erroneous in certain parts, while other parts of it contain some truth, what tests do the Christians have in their hands for distinguishing truth from error? If it is reason, then the Christian faith must openly avow itself to be based on reason and not on revelation. But if their test is revelation, surely some pure and trustworthy revelation free from error is required to sift the truth from the falsehood contained in the Bible. This revelation is found in the Holy Qoran, for it is the only book on the face of the earth which claims to be the true and unmixed Word of God, and hence its own necessity as the pure Divine Word. We are glad to see that the view which the Holy Qoran took of the Bible has at last been admitted by even the missionaries.

“ The truth of the Higher Criticism and the error of the



Bible being once recognised, it is difficult to see how the Christian religion can stand for one moment. . . . We hope that the Christian missionaries will plainly avow these truths and condemn the false belief of the Divinity of Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>

The critics are too much infatuated with their criticisms to care for these things; but they will not be ignored by intelligent and thoughtful men of the world.

To such I commend the following words from the pen of a great scholar and theologian. Written more than half a century ago, they betokened almost prophetic insight. In his commentary on the passage in the Sermon on the Mount, which I have cited on a preceding page, Dean Alford writes:—

“It is important to observe *in these days* how the Lord here *includes the Old Testament and all its unfolding of the Divine purposes regarding Himself in His teaching of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven*. I say this, because it is always in *contempt and setting aside of the Old Testament* that Rationalism has begun. First, *its historical truth*—then its *theocratic dispensation* and the *types and prophecies* connected with it, are swept away; so that Christ came to fulfil nothing, and becomes only a teacher or a martyr; and thus the way is paved for a similar rejection of the New Testa-

<sup>1</sup> *The Review of Religions*, Punjab, May, 1903. I have taken this from the *Record* of 26th June. Since the above was written, a letter received from a relative—one of the oldest and most trusted of the Church Missionary Society missionaries in North-West India—mentions a visit paid him by a leading Mahometan, and says: “He talked much about the Higher Criticism, saying that everybody knew now that the Christian’s Bible was not inspired, and therefore not the Word of God at all, and so of course very inferior to the Qoran.”

ment—beginning with the narratives of the birth and infancy as theocratic myths—advancing to the denial of His miracles—then attacking the truthfulness of His own sayings which are grounded on the Old Testament as a revelation from God—and so finally leaving us nothing in the Scriptures but, as a German writer of this school has expressed it, ‘a mythology not so attractive as that of Greece.’ That this is the course which unbelief *has run* in Germany, should be a pregnant warning to the decriers of the Old Testament among ourselves. It should be a maxim for every expositor and every student that Scripture is a whole, and stands or falls together.”<sup>1</sup>

Dean Alford was no stranger to the “Higher Criticism.” Not even the “Essays and Reviews” had appeared when he wrote these words; but he was well versed in the German literature upon the subject. And has anything since transpired to weaken their force? Archæological research has been rewarded by unprecedented success, but *every discovery tends to confirm the truth of the Bible*. Can anyone point to a single exception?

But with the Critics, as Professor Sayce indignantly declares—

“Baseless assumptions have been placed on a level with ascertained facts, hasty conclusions have been put forward as principles of science, and we have been called upon to accept the prepossessions and fancies of the individual critic as the revelation of a new gospel. If the archæologist ventured to suggest that the facts he had discovered did not support the views of the Critic, he was told that he was no philologist. The opinion of a modern German theologian was worth more, at all events in the eyes of his ‘school,’ than the most positive testimony of the monuments of antiquity.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greek Test. (Matt. v. 18). The italics are in the original.

<sup>2</sup> “Higher Criticism and the Monuments,” p. 5.

In this, indeed, lies the strength of "the critical position." Arguments can be refuted, and allegations of fact can be challenged. But a system which rests on assumptions and theories eludes us. It baffles every effort to grapple with it.

The pseudo-Critic, like the Roman Catholic, professes to accept the Bible. But what the Church is to the one, "Modern Criticism" is to the other—a sort of inaccessible Grand Lama whose decrees (unlike the sacred writings) are authoritative and must not be questioned. And by those decrees the Bible must be interpreted. Let the reader study any one of the characteristic articles in Hastings' "Dictionary" or Cheyne's "Encyclopedia," and he will understand my meaning.

Some heresy is started by one of the Critics—generally a German sceptic; others join in a chorus of approval, and their united voice is impersonated as "the best and latest scholarship." To illustrate this I need not go beyond the Pentateuch heresy. *The one and only fact* on which the whole superstructure rests is that in the eighteenth year of Josiah "the Book of the Law" was found in the sanctuary<sup>1</sup> (a fact which is explained by the further fact that it had been placed there by Divine command!).<sup>2</sup> But the pseudo-Criticism has decided against the genuineness of "the Mosaic Books," and therefore, of course, Josiah's "find" must have been a forgery. That decision, as we now know, was based on an ignorant blunder. The testimony of true Higher Criticism is against it, and it is vetoed by the authoritative teaching of the Lord

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xxii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxxi. 26 (R. V.).

Jesus Christ. But that counts for nothing; for the decrees of the Critics are irreversible. And so this baseless theory, backed up by a plausible parade of the difficulties which beset the "orthodox belief," is put forward as an "assured result of modern criticism."

I am not addressing Sunday-school children, but intelligent men of the world, who are competent to refer to the books I mention, and to judge for themselves whether my statement of the matter is not fair and true.

## CHAPTER X

**I**N the preceding pages I have addressed my readers as a jury. And in this closing chapter I submit a final issue to their judgment. What excuse can be offered to justify sensible and thoughtful men in prostrating themselves before this fetish of the pseudo-Criticism? "The pseudo-Criticism," I say advisedly, for this sceptical crusade has but an illegitimate kinship with true Higher Criticism—a system of Bible study to which we owe much, and which merits respect and confidence.

"The latest scholarship"? Surely if there be any sphere in which novelty should inspire caution, if not distrust, it is here. And yet the pseudo-Critics regard the ablest scholars, even of the last generation, much as fashionable ladies treat a last year's bonnet. As for the Apostles, and the Fathers, and the martyrs, and "the whole company of Christian people" for eighteen centuries, even our Sunday-school children are now taught to regard them with patronising pity! And no wonder. "If they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?"—considering how the Master is treated by this teaching, His servants are not likely to be held in much respect.

But, we are told, these men are earnest and devout,

and they know Hebrew and Greek. The men of the now discredited Tübingen school were earnest and devout, and knew Hebrew and Greek. The men who crucified Christ knew Hebrew and Greek, and some of them at least were far more earnest and far more devout. Men like Saul of Tarsus stood higher in these respects than any of our modern Critics. Zeal and piety and scholarship afford no proof of shrewdness and wisdom even in the affairs of daily life, and they are quite compatible with ignorance and error in the sphere of spiritual truth.

But, it will be urged again, all this ignores the difficulties in the Bible, of which the Critics offer a solution. I dissociate myself from those who deny or minimise the difficulties. But the greatest difficulties are not those with which this criticism deals. The sort of difficulties to which the Critics seem to attach most importance remind us of old Fuller's sarcasm about men who "complain that the room is dark when their eyes are blind." And even these they solve at the cost of bringing down the house upon our heads. For the Christian to solve difficulties by repudiating the teaching of Christ, is like committing suicide to escape from danger.

The difficulties which most sorely try the Christian's faith have their counterpart in the natural sphere. This fact, indeed, affords no solution of them, but it bars the argument that they disprove the Divine authorship of the Bible. God's work in nature abounds in mysteries which perplex and baffle us; and if the Bible be from God, we may expect to find in it mysteries as insoluble. If we could master the Bible

as we master other books, it would go far to prove that it is on a level with other books. It would give proof that the God of nature is not the author of it.

The wildest superstitions of human religions present nothing so essentially incredible as Christianity. That a Jewish mechanic was the Only-begotten Son of God, and that in His death, when consigned to the gibbet as a blasphemer and disturber of the peace, He became the propitiation for the sin of the world—if this be true, any hard-headed schoolboy may be trusted to see through the elaborate web of “plausible arguments,” and assumptions, and theories, and quibbles by which the Critics avoid the obvious conclusion that the sacrifices and offerings of the Pentateuch were a Divine foreshadowing of it. But is it true? May it not be an exquisite dream of mystics, suggested by that very literature which the Critics seek to discredit?

The scepticism of book-scholars and professional ministers of religion may exhaust itself in the vagaries of the pseudo-Criticism, but with thoughtful and earnest men of the world it is here at the very foundations that faith and unbelief measure their distance. If the mysteries of the Christian faith are Divinely revealed, reason bows before the God of reason, and accepts them. But if they have no higher sanction than the Critics’ Bible, a Bible mutilated, disparaged, and discredited, then with every real thinker—with every man of common-sense, indeed—reason will assert its supremacy and refuse assent.

In view of the difficulties which confront the fearless seeker after truth, the theories of the Critics remind us of the pills to protect from earthquakes. The

real Bible difficulties are akin to those which in the natural sphere make infidels of so many men of science. They bring us at times to the verge of rejecting the whole scheme of revelation, and regarding Christianity, as Harnack does, as a sublime dream, a noble system of ethics and mystical philosophy, a splendid type of Neo-Buddhism—Buddhism illumined by a personal God.

And even this is but a precarious resting-place. For it is not so clear that Matthew Arnold is wrong in maintaining that reason does not lead to belief in a *personal* God. Once we leave the anchorage of faith we may drift to the blind and hopeless agnosticism of Lord Tennyson's creed: "There's a something that watches over us; and our individuality endures: that's my faith, and that's all my faith."<sup>1</sup>

The public facts of the life and ministry and death of the Nazarene are as well accredited as any facts of ancient history. Statements like those of the "Encyclopædia Biblica," that there are but nine passages in the Gospels deserving of credence, are but the

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1903 (p. 1070). The editor quotes it from an article written in the Poet Laureate's lifetime. Numerous passages in his poems indicate a very different faith. How is the enigma to be explained? Was his agnosticism assumed to please his agnostic friends? What a contrast his words present to the testimony of that great statesman and lawyer and judge, Earl Cairns: "Every day I rise with a sweet consciousness that God loves me and cares for me. He has pardoned all my sins for Christ's sake, and I look forward to the future with no dread. . . . Suppose it were possible to convince me that this was a delusion on my part . . . all would be dark to me."



*bêtises* of blind apostates. They are an insult to the intelligence of common men. But in the Christian system these facts owe all their significance to the Divine revelation that the Nazarene was the Son of God; that His death was an expiatory sacrifice for human sin; that He is now enthroned in heaven as the Saviour of men; and that He is coming again to be their Judge.

And this New Testament revelation is inextricably interwoven with the Hebrew Scriptures. If the Divine authority of the Old Testament be denied (to cite again Dean Alford's words), Christ came to fulfil nothing, and the way is paved for the rejection of the New Testament itself: its very framework is dislocated. Its credentials are destroyed, and with them its credibility. Instead of resting on preceding revelations, of which they are the realisation and fulfilment, the mysteries of our faith are left hanging "in the air."

Can anyone who disputes this cite the name of even one great thinker who, after giving up faith in the Bible, has maintained his belief in the Deity of Christ and the Atonement? If smaller men adhere to that belief, it is because they are either illogical or weak. When in the apostasy of Israel the Shekinah glory departed from the mercy-seat it still lingered near the shrine.<sup>1</sup> And so it may be with these men; they still feel the power of the truth which they have lost.

With others, again, the faith which they have thus undermined is buttressed by superstition. The Bishop of Worcester is the foremost champion and exponent of this system. The Church of Rome acknowledges

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel x.

the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. But just as the interpretation of the statutes rests with the King's Courts, and not with private citizens, so the interpretation of the Scriptures rests with the Church, and not with private Christians. This is at least coherent and logical. But this Neo-Romanism regards the Church as more and higher than "the pillar and stay of the truth." Its function is not to interpret the Divinely inspired Scriptures, but to supply their defects. It claims to be itself the Divine oracle—a claim which even Rome would anathematize. The Gospels which tell us of the Incarnation and Atonement are marred by error, but yet we are to accept these mysteries because the Church accredits them.<sup>1</sup>

This theory I leave to the judgment of the thoughtful. My only comment on it will be, that if we must give ourselves up to be thus blindfolded and blindly led I would rather find myself in the ditch with devout men like Dr. Gore, than in the other ditch with the Rationalists.

But is it a choice of ditches? Is this what Protestantism has come to? Have we been delivered from the yoke of the priests only to be brought into bondage to the professors?

In a previous chapter I have quoted words to indicate the spirit in which the genuine truth-seeker studies nature. The true "philosopher" is ever ready to echo the exclamation which the scheme of revelation evoked from the inspired Apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways

<sup>1</sup> "Lux Mundi," p. 340.

past finding out!"<sup>1</sup> But a very different spirit marks the writings of the Critics. No "vision of the Infinite" checks what Pusey calls their "cold-blooded patronising ways" of dealing with the Bible. Wisdom was born with the German Rationalists of this new crusade. No suspicion that they may be mistaken seems ever to cross their minds.

This, I doubt not, will bring up the taunt that the preceding pages bespeak equal confidence. But the taunt is not a fair one. For this book is avowedly a piece of destructive criticism; nothing more. Its purpose is not to expound the Scriptures, but to expose fallacies. And surely one who is no stranger to such a task may enter on it without pretending to be a Solon.

The pseudo-Critics boast that the majority of professional scholars are upon their side. If this be so, it is only natural that men who wish to be considered scholars should fall into line with them. But as the professors themselves have ruled out philology in dealing with questions such, *e. g.*, as the genuineness of Daniel, they have, by their own showing, no more fitness to deal with them than a company of eminent artists or musicians. If they have any special competence for the task, it must depend on qualities which they possess in common with "men of affairs"—qualities in which "men of affairs" are more likely to excel. Respect and admiration for scholars within their proper province is compatible with distrust of them when they pass outside that province, as they do in this criticism crusade.

<sup>1</sup> Romans xi. 33.

In conclusion, then, I renew my appeal to intelligent and thoughtful men to ignore the guillotine by which the pseudo-Critics and their press organs seek to kill independent inquiry. "I hold no man's proxy," and I expect no one to be influenced by my judgment. My appeal is that others shall look into these questions for themselves, as I have done.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>No better beginning can be made than the Daniel controversy. First, because the rejection of the book is absolutely the *most* "assured result of modern criticism," and therefore we here attack the critical position at its strongest point. And secondly, because, though dull reading as formulated by the critics and the theologians, as a study in evidence it is full of interest. Others will find, as I did, that the case against the book is a strong one, and that grave difficulties attend the so-called orthodox belief, but that the difficulties which beset the "critical hypothesis" are far more serious, and that the positive case in favour of the book is unanswerable. I will only add that when the true Higher Criticism shakes itself free from its counterfeit, a solution will perhaps be found for some of the difficulties on which the Critics lay stress. For Daniel was edited by the men of the Great Synagogue after the Nehemiah revival, and the LXX. version gives proof that it had been corrupted.



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